MAJOR-GENERAL

SIR THOMAS MUNRO

BART., K.C.B.

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GOVERNOR OF MADRAS

SELECTIONS FROM HIS MINUTES AND OTHER OFFICIAL WRITINGS

EDITED

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY MEMOIR AND NOTES

BY

SIR ALEXANDER J. ARBUTHNOT, K.C.S.I., C.I.E.

IN TWO VOLUMES

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DEDICATION.

TO THE RIGHT HONBLE. LORD NAPIER AND ETTRICK, K.T.

DEAR LORD NAPIER,

You have been kind enough to allow me to inscribe to you these memorials of the most distinguished of your predecessors in the Government of Madras.

I asked your permission to connect your name with this work, knowing that you entertain a genuine admiration of the character and policy of Sir Thomas Munro; and in availing myself of that permission, I cannot abstain from expressing my conviction that there is no British Statesman, at the present time, who possesses so thorough a knowledge of our great Indian dependency, her people, and her wants, as that which your Lordship acquired when filling the post in which Munro died, and that few politicians have so consistently acted upon the principle, long recognized by the most eminent men of all parties, but nowadays too often forgotten, that India should be regarded as beyond the scope of English party politics.

Believe me,

Dear Lord Napier,

Yours very sincerely,

A. J. ARBUTHNOT.

NEWTOWN HOUSE, NEAR NEWBURY,
4th March, 1881.

PREFACE.

MORE than half a century has passed by since the publication of Mr. Gleig's Life of Sir Thomas Munro made the English public acquainted with the services, and to a certain extent with the opinions, of a statesman who has long been regarded as one of the ablest of the many able men who have taken a part in founding and in administering our British Indian Empire. Mr. Gleig's work contains copious extracts from Sir Thomas Munro's private correspondence and several specimens of his official writings; but anything like a complete selection from the latter was necessarily beyond the scope of a work designed rather to instruct and interest the general reader, than to serve as a book of reference for the administrator. It has, however, long been felt, and especially by those whose official position has given them access to Munro's papers, that a compilation of them, so selected and arranged as to present a tolerably complete record of his views and policy, could not fail to prove of much practical value

to all whose business it is to study Indian questions, whether as administrators or as critics. A suggestion to this effect, made by the Madras Government some years ago, was approved by Sir Charles Wood (now Viscount Halifax), then Secretary of State for India, and the work of editing the papers was entrusted by the Madras Government to two gentlemen in succession, both of whom, owing to different causes, were unable to proceed with it. On my retirement from the Council of the Governor of Madras, towards the end of 1872, I undertook to execute the work, and had made some progress in it, when my appointment to the Council of the Governor-General obliged me in a great measure to suspend it, and I was only able to resume it after my return from India a few months ago.

The papers contained in these volumes have been selected from a considerable mass of papers. They are arranged under five heads: Revenue, Judicial, Political, Military, and Miscellaneous; and they comprise, it is believed, all the more important of the official papers left on record by Munro. They embody his views on the land tenures of the south of India, and especially on the ryotwár system of land revenue, with which his name and authority have so long been identified; his opinions on the judicial and police administration, on the treatment of native feudatory chiefs, on native education, on the employment and advancement of natives in the public service, on the native army, on

famines, on the press, and, in fact, on most of the important questions which then, as now, engaged the attention and taxed the powers of the rulers of India. The compilation includes a valuable series of Minutes on the first war with Burma, the successful prosecution of which was mainly due to Munro's active and cordial co-operation, as Governor of Madras, with the Governor-General, Lord Amherst.

For the benefit of those who may not have an opportunity of studying Mr. Gleig's work, I have thought it advisable to prefix to the Minutes an introductory Memoir, embodying in a compendious form a narrative of Munro's military and administrative career, and of the principal events in the history of British India, between 1780 and 1827, with which it was connected. In this Memoir I have drawn largely upon the private letters, published by Mr. Gleig,* and forming on some points a most valuable supplement to the official Minutes. Indeed, on the great political and military questions with which, in the time of Lord Cornwallis, Lord Wellesley, and Lord Hastings, the Government of India had to deal, the Minutes, without the aid of the private letters, would furnish a very inadequate account of Munro's opinions, or of the extent to which he influenced the views of his official superiors; for up to 1820, when he became Governor of Madras, his situation

* The references made in the footnotes of the Memoir to Gleig's Life of Munro are to the second edition of that work, in two volumes, published by Colburn and Bentley in 1831.

was a comparatively subordinate one, and it was only by means of private correspondence that he was in a position to urge his views on matters beyond the scope of his official duties. Under this category must be included everything that he wrote on the policy to be pursued towards Tippoo and the Mahrattas, on the question of subsidiary forces, and generally on the political prospects and requirements of British rule in India up to the date of its consolidation by the war with the Mahrattas in 1817 and 1818.

The Memoir also contains some explanatory observations on questions connected with the revenue and judicial administration which are discussed in the Minutes, and which, involving as they do allusions to facts and circumstances unfamiliar to those who have not gone through an Indian training, appear to require some explanation.

One word as to the spelling of the native names. The plan which I have generally followed has been to adopt the system of spelling which was introduced by Sir William Jones, and which is generally observed by continental writers on India, except in the case of names such as Madras, Bombay, Hyderabad, Trichinopoly, Hyder, Tippoo, etc., etc., which by long usage have become stereotyped according to the mode of spelling adopted by the English at an early period of British Indian history. This is the plan which has lately been sanctioned by the Government of India for

official use, and it is upon this plan that the spelling of native names is regulated in the district and provincial Gazetteers now in course of preparation. But in one or two cases, owing to the fact that a portion of the Minutes was printed before the question of the transliteration of native names had been finally settled by the Government of India, there has been a deviation from the plan now laid down. For instance, the principal town in one of the districts commonly known as the Ceded Districts, has been spelt Ballári, whereas Bellary, the spelling long recognized by established usage, is that which has been prescribed by the Government of India. Here, however, I may mention that Ballári was the spelling invariably adopted by Munro. Another deviation from the established plan occurs in the printing of the native names mentioned in the letters of the late Duke of Wellington, which are given as footnotes to the Memoir on pages lxviii.–lxx. It appeared to me that it would be more interesting to most readers if these letters were printed without any sort of alteration, especially as two of them do not appear to have been published on any previous occasion. The originals are in the manuscript library of the British Museum, and were brought to my notice by Mr. R. Garnett, the present Superintendent of the Reading Room. My acknowledgments are due to Mr. Garnett for his kind assistance in this and in other matters, and also

to several of the officials at the India Office, including Mr. Pedder, the Revenue Secretary, Mr. Charles Prinsep, Mr. Peters (now retired), Dr. Rost, the Librarian, and Mr. Waterfield, the Assistant Librarian, who have aided me in my researches in the Record Room and Library of that office. Nor must I omit to mention that in connection with some of the notes appended to the Minutes I have received valuable aid from my old friend and former colleague in the Legislative Council at Madras, the Honourable Vembákam Rámiengár, one of the ablest native officials in India, whose honourable and useful career may justly be cited as one of the many instances which the history of British Indian administration has supplied of the soundness of Munro's view, that we should not be 'satisfied with merely securing our power and protecting the inhabitants of India; but that we should 'endeavour to raise their character and to render 'them worthy of filling higher situations in the management of their country, and of devising plans for 'its improvement.'

A. J. ARBUTHNOT.

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ERRATA.—VOL. I.

Page lxxxi., line 28, *for* "features" *read* "feature."
" 68, line 20, *for* "Hyder ruined Canara" *read* "Hyder received Canara."
" 157, line 32, *for* "choose" *read* "chose."
" 250, line 33, *for* "this" *read* "their."

military history, mathematics, and chemistry. While still a mere lad, he commenced the study of political economy. He was at the same time a keen reader of poetry and romance, and had a turn for languages which stood him in good stead in after life. At the age of sixteen, with the help only of a grammar and dictionary, he acquired a sufficient knowledge of the Spanish language to enable him to read 'Don Quixote' in the original. He had also made some progress in French and Italian. He was an adept at all athletic sports—a good swimmer and a skilful boxer. With reference to the latter accomplishment, it was said of him by one of his schoolfellows, that 'he beat every boy in the school he 'fought, but he never sought a quarrel and was never 'in the smallest degree insolent or domineering; on 'the contrary, he was remarkably good-natured and 'peaceable, and his superiority in fighting became 'known only in consequence of his resisting unpro-'voked attacks of quarrelsome boys of superior age 'and strength, and beating them by his coolness, his 'courage, and his unequalled endurance. He was the 'protector of the weak against the strong, and at 'the same time he was so inoffensive that he had 'no enemies.' *

With such qualities Munro was naturally a popular boy; but even in boyhood a certain degree of prudence and reserve, which seem to have characterized his disposition throughout his life, somewhat narrowed the circle of his school friendships. Among his most intimate friends at that period were the two Moores—Sir John, who was killed at Corunna, and Sir Graham, a naval officer,

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 3.

with whom he kept up a correspondence to the end of his life. Munro's views on the subject of school friendships were such as are seldom expressed, although, perhaps, more often entertained than is commonly supposed. Writing on the subject to one of his brothers some years after he went to India, he remarked:

Our attachment to early acquaintances is as frequently owing to chance placing us together,—to being engaged in the same studies or amusements, as to worth or merit of any kind. Such friends are not selected; and therefore men, as they advance in years, drop them for others they think better of; and if they retain an affection for any of them, it is perhaps only for one or two who may possess those qualities which they would wish chosen friends to possess, though it may have been circumstances very different from those qualities that formed the first attachment. If among your school friends there are many who are worthy of a warm friendship, you have been more fortunate than I; for though I was happy with my companions at home, when I pass them in review, and recollect their habits, tempers, and dispositions, I can hardly see more than one or two whose loss I can with reason regret. Whatever you may think now, you may be assured that those who have now the first place in your esteem, will give way to objects more deserving, because chosen when your discernment was more mature. It must be confessed that there is a satisfaction in the company of men engaged in the same pursuits as ourselves; but it does not follow that they alone are deserving of our friendship, and that there is no happiness in the society of other men. I like an Orientalist, a politician, a man that walks and swims or plays fives, because I like all these things myself; but I at the same time have, perhaps, a greater friendship for a man who cares for none of these amusements.*

At the age of sixteen Munro left College and entered the counting-house of Messrs. Somerville and Gordon, West India merchants at Glasgow, for

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 157.

the purpose of being trained for the mercantile profession. He remained in this employment for two years, when, his father's affairs having become involved, in consequence of the American war, it was found that it would be impossible to establish Thomas Munro in business, and an appointment was accordingly procured for him in the maritime service of the East India Company, which was shortly afterwards exchanged for a cadetship of infantry at the Presidency of Madras. Munro sailed for India in the same ship (the *Walpole*) to which he had been posted as a midshipman previous to his nomination to a military cadetship, and arrived at Madras on the 15th of January, 1780.

The period at which Munro reached India, was one of the most critical periods in the history of British rule in that country. On the western side of the peninsula the English had been engaged for five years in a war with the Mahratta chiefs of Poona, Gwalior, and Indore. Towards the close of the previous year a confederacy had been formed between the chiefs in question, the Rájá of Berár, the Nizam of Hyderabad, and Hyder Ali Khán, the ruler of Mysore, the avowed object of which was the expulsion of the English from India. The aspect of affairs at Madras was most critical. The especial danger to that Presidency lay in the direction of Mysore, whose able and warlike chief was already engaged in preparations for a second invasion of the Carnatic. Hyder Ali's first inroad into that country, just eleven years before, when he had carried fire and sword through the districts immediately adjoining Madras, and had dictated a treaty under the walls of Fort St. George, was still fresh in the memories of

the English residents. Nor was the condition of the British administration in any part of India such as to justify confidence in its power to overcome the dangers which threatened it. At Calcutta the Supreme Government was convulsed by divisions among its members, which for a time paralyzed the efforts of the able statesman who presided over it. At Madras, where, only a few years before, the Governor* had been violently deposed from his office and placed in confinement by a majority of his Council, the local Government was incapable of adequately realizing or effectively dealing with the crisis in which it was placed. The Madras authorities had received ample warning of Hyder Ali's hostile intentions, and had some months previously communicated their apprehensions to the Government of Bengal; but as the time drew near for those intentions to be carried into execution, they seem to have lost all thought of the necessity for preparation, and to have been only awakened to a sense of their real position when Hyder's army was within a few days' march of Madras. In the course of the months of January and February, 1780, troops which could ill be spared from the defence of the Carnatic, were sent to Bombay to the assistance of General Goddard, and in the latter month the Governor† of Madras, who was about to leave India, placed on record a Minute expressing his satisfaction at 'the 'perfect tranquillity of the Carnatic' and of the Company's northern possessions, and his expectation

* Lord Pigot.

† Sir Thomas Rumbold. He was said to have been originally a waiter at White's. He had been a member of the Court of Directors previous to his appointment as Governor of Madras. A despatch dismissing him for certain questionable proceedings connected with the Vizianagram zemindári, crossed him on his way to England.

that in consequence of 'the arrival of the fleet 'with the King's troops,' that part of India would 'remain quiet.' Even as late as the 17th of July the new Governor and the Commander-in-Chief declared that there was no danger of an immediate invasion. Four days later, Hyder entered the Carnatic.

At Bombay the local administration appears to have been free from internal divisions; but it had given signal proof of incapacity in its management of the Mahratta war, which, but for the energy of Hastings and the strategic ability of General Goddard,* must have ended in disaster.

* Just a year before Munro reached India, General Goddard had made a march which, until a few months ago, was unexampled in the annals of Indian warfare. In the early part of the first Mahratta war, Hastings despatched across the continent of India a small force of 4000 men, of whom only 600 were Europeans, to the aid of the Government of Bombay. It was a bold undertaking, for up to that time no British force had ever crossed that part of the Indian continent. The command was entrusted in the first instance to Colonel Leslie, an officer of good reputation, but who was in bad health and made such slow progress, that Hastings deemed it necessary to supersede him, and to appoint General (then Colonel) Goddard to the command. Goddard marched from Burhanpur to Surat, a distance of 300 miles, in 19 days, or at the rate of about 15¾ miles a day, eluding by the expedition of his movements a force of 20,000 horse, which the Mahrattas sent to intercept him. The march was through a country then utterly unknown, and of which no maps existed. It was denounced by Mr. Dundas, the Indian minister of the day, as 'one of the frantic military 'exploits of Hastings.' It is natural, at the present time, to compare with General Goddard's achievement the brilliant feat lately performed by Sir Frederick Roberts, in his march from Cabul to Candahar, which, when it was undertaken, was denounced in some quarters in language not very dissimilar to that used a century ago regarding Goddard's march. The rapidity of Roberts's march was somewhat less than that of Goddard's, the distance marched by the former having been 322 miles and the time occupied, including two halts, 23 days, or a rate of 14 miles a day against Goddard's 15¾ miles; but the country through which Roberts passed, though better known, having been recently traversed by Sir Donald Stewart's division, was far more difficult and more trying to the troops than that traversed by Goddard in 1779. In each case the object of the march was to retrieve a disaster to the British arms, and in each case that object was accomplished with brilliant success.

Lord Lake's famous march in 1804 in pursuit of Holkar's cavalry, when he traversed 350 miles in 14 days, cannot be compared with either of the above achievements, as Lord Lake's

The British possessions in India, except in Bengal, were at that time extremely limited. In the south, the East India Company owned the fort and town of Madras, the adjoining district (known in those days as the Jágír, and now styled the district of Chingleput), the town and fort of Cuddalore and some of the adjoining territory, the port of Dévikota and certain villages in Tanjore, and four out of the five sirkárs on the eastern coast, now known as the Northern Sirkárs, for which, however, they were bound to pay an annual tribute of five lakhs of rupees (£50,000) to the Nizam. The rest of the Carnatic, including the districts of Nellore, North Arcot, the greater part of South Arcot, and Trichinopoly, still belonged to the Nawáb of the Carnatic. Of the remainder of what now constitutes the Madras Presidency, the greater part of Tanjore was still held by its Mahratta chief; Cuddapah, Salem, Coimbatore, Madura, Tinnevelly, Malabar and Canara, Karnúl, and a portion of Ballári had been brought under the rule of Hyder, while the remainder of Ballári and Guntúr belonged to the Nizam. In Bengal, though the youngest of the British settlements, the Company, owing to the genius and vigour of Clive, had become possessed of a far more extensive, and at the same time extremely compact, territory, comprising the whole of the fertile districts of Bengal proper, south of the Brahmaputra, Behar, and a part of Orissa. Bombay was still little more than a commercial factory, holding no territorial possessions, except the island of Bombay, the adjoining port of Bassein, and the island of Salsette.

force was composed entirely of cavalry and mounted artillery. The same may be said of the most rapid marches in the Mutiny, which, when of any considerable length, were made with mounted troops.

In addition to the formidable confederacy of native chiefs, which at the time of which we write actually threatened the British power in India, there was every prospect of that confederacy being speedily strengthened by aid from France, which had declared war against England in 1778, and which subsequently afforded material assistance, both by land and by sea, to Hyder Ali and to his son and successor Tippoo Sultán.

Nor were the difficulties and weaknesses of the position in India counterbalanced by the strength of the Home Administration. Lord North's weak and unfortunate Government was still in office, tottering towards its fall. A strong party in the Court of Directors was opposed to the Governor-General, and supported the factious antagonism arrayed against him in his Council; and there can be little doubt that had the confederacy of native chiefs been more united in their operations and in their aims, or had a weaker man than Warren Hastings filled at this time the position of Governor-General, the extension and consolidation of British rule in India, which only a few years later had become an established fact, would have been one of the many 'might have beens,' which abound in the history of nations, as well as in the lives of individuals.

Such was the state of public affairs when Thomas Munro, then a lad of nearly nineteen, landed at Madras. He remained for six months at the Presidency town, where he did duty with the cadet company, learnt his drill, and studied the native languages. Immediately on his arrival he was robbed by a native servant of some of his money and the greater part of his wardrobe, which he found it no

easy matter to replace; for in those days the pay of a cadet of infantry was only eight pagodas, or about £3 a month. Among the residents of Madras to whom he was introduced, his chief friends appear to have been Mr. David Haliburton, a civil servant, who was afterwards a member of the Board of Revenue and Persian translator to Government, and an eccentric merchant of the name of Ross, at whose house he made the acquaintance of a still more eccentric man of science, of the name of Kœnig, a native of Livonia, whose English Munro describes in his letters as a mixture of Latin, Portuguese, and French, but who seems to have been much attracted by the young cadet's proficiency in chemistry. After having had a narrow escape of being appointed, at his own request, to the unfortunate detachment under Colonel Baillie, which on the 10th of September was beaten by and surrendered to Hyder, Munro was sent in July with the regiment to which he was attached, first to Poonamallee and afterwards to St. Thomas Mount, whence, on the 20th of August, he marched with the army under the command of his namesake, Lieutenant-General Sir Hector Munro,* to meet the invading army of Mysore. Munro appears to have been present at all the operations under Sir Hector Munro and Sir Eyre Coote in 1780, 1781, 1782, and 1783, when, peace having been made with France, and Tippoo—who, on the death of Hyder Ali in 1782, had succeeded his father on the throne of Mysore—having moved the Mysorean army to the western coast, hostilities ceased in the Carnatic. These operations included the retreat of

* Sir Hector Munro does not appear to have been related to the subject of this memoir.

Sir Hector Munro from Conjeveram to Madras after the defeat of Colonel Baillie's force, the relief of Wandiwash, the battle of Porto Novo, the battle of Sholinghar, the taking of Chittoor, the battle and siege of Cuddalore, and several other engagements. In November, 1781, when still an ensign of less than two years' service, Munro was appointed quarter-master of a brigade, and at the attack on the French lines and battle of Cuddalore on the 13th of June, 1783, he acted as aide-de-camp to the officer who commanded the centre attack. From 1783 to 1788 Munro was employed on garrison duty at various stations. During this period he served with no less than five regiments, viz. the 1st, 16th, 21st, and 30th Native Infantry and a regiment of European Infantry, the number of which is not given, but to which he appears to have been posted on his promotion to the rank of lieutenant in 1786. In August, 1788, he was appointed an assistant in the Intelligence Department under Captain Read, and was attached to the head-quarters of a force sent to take possession of the district of Guntúr, which in that year was ceded by the Nizam to the Company. He continued to be employed in the Intelligence Department until October, 1790, when, war having broken out afresh with Tippoo, he rejoined his regiment, the 21st Native Infantry, and served with the army under Colonel Maxwell, which invaded the Baramahal. He subsequently shared in the pursuit of Tippoo by Lieutenant-General Meadows through the Tapur pass on the 18th of November, 1790, and afterwards, in 1791 and 1792, in most of the operations under Lord Cornwallis, including the siege and capture of Bangalore. In March, 1792, he accompanied the de-

tachment in charge of the two sons of Tippoo, who were sent as hostages to Madras, and in the following month he was appointed one of the three military assistants, deputed to conduct the civil administration of the Baramahal under Captain (afterwards Lieutenant-Colonel) Alexander Read.

During the whole of this period, as indeed throughout his life, Munro kept up a constant correspondence, principally with the members of his own family. His letters, even in the earliest years of his Indian service, especially those addressed to his father, to whom he usually wrote on the military operations, if they do not manifest brilliant literary ability, are remarkable productions to have come from the pen of so youthful a writer. Clear in expression, copious in their details, and free from all affectation of style, they contain what have been considered by competent judges as the most trustworthy narratives that have been written of the operations to which they referred. Dr. Wilson, in his annotations to Mills' 'History of British India,' more than once cites Munro's letters as embodying the most accurate accounts available of some of the engagements with Hyder, incidents in which had become the subject of controversy. These letters are for the most part simple narratives of facts which came under the writer's observation, and are but seldom interspersed with comment or criticism; and when comments do occur, they are very often merely recapitulations of the remarks and arguments which have been used by others regarding the tactics or policy of the generals. Thus, referring to the defeat of Colonel Baillie's force, Munro wrote:

The loss of Colonel Baillie's army is the severest blow

the English ever sustained in India. Some persons pretend to vindicate Munro;* but by far the greater part impute to his imprudent conduct the destruction of the detachment. Why, say they, did he linger so long within a few miles of Baillie without attempting to join him? Why, instead of sending the Grenadiers, did he not go with the whole army? And why, when he saw Hyder march, did he not follow him instantly, instead of waiting till the morning? On the other hand, it is said that it was reasonable for him to conjecture that, as Baillie had been able without any assistance to repulse the enemy, he would be still more able to do so again after being so powerfully reinforced; and that by sending a detachment, had it succeeded, he would have lost less time than by going with the whole army.†

Occasionally, however, remarks are made which show that the writer had very definite views of his own. Thus, in reference to the same disaster, he remarks:

The General, by paying spies too sparingly, received very little and often false intelligence: he neither rewarded those who told the truth, nor did he punish those who deceived him. One day upon the march a harkára ‡ came up and delivered him a letter from Colonel Baillie. He read it; he seemed pleased with the contents, and he ordered his dubash to give the messenger two pagodas (sixteen shillings). The man smiled. It was a poor reward for having received two wounds and risked his life in bringing him the intelligence. On our way to join the detachment, three men who were found sitting near the road were brought to the General. He told them if they would carry him to Baillie he would reward them; but if they should misguide him, he would instantly put them to death. They walked at the head of the army with halters about their necks, and they conducted us to the side of a lake where the road terminated. The General followed them, notwithstanding that it was obvious to every one that they were carrying us away from the scene of action, as we heard the firing and saw the smoke of the cannon

* Sir Hector Munro is here referred to. † Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 26.
‡ See Minutes, vol. i. p. 59.

nearly four miles distant in a different direction. These men were suffered to escape.*

In a later letter referring to the operations against the French before Cuddalore in 1783, the command of which, owing to the illness and departure of Sir Eyre Coote, had devolved upon General Stuart, a very incompetent officer, Munro wrote:

> The flank attack did not move till the front one was repulsed. Had it advanced at the same time, two regiments that were at the redoubt would have been cut off. There seemed to be no connexion in our movements, every one was at a loss what to do, and nothing saved our army from a total defeat, but the French being, like ourselves, without a general.†

The letters contain no mention whatever of his own part in these actions, many of which were hotly contested, and attended with heavy losses. In one of them the loss on the British side in killed and wounded was nearly sixty officers, seven hundred European soldiers, and two hundred and fifty sepoys. In another the loss was five hundred men. But although Munro makes no mention of his own services, it is evident, from his having been selected in his first year of service for the appointment of quartermaster of a brigade, that he gained the favourable opinion of his military superiors at a very early date, and it is to be gathered from a remark in one of his letters,‡ to the effect that his situation (he was writing in November, 1785) was not such as it would have been, had Sir Eyre Coote lived, that he had attracted the favourable notice of that distinguished general.

During the five or six years which followed the

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 27. † Ibid., p. 68. ‡ Ibid., p. 79.

conclusion of the war, and which he spent in the comparative leisure of regimental duty in garrison, Munro appears to have devoted a good deal of his spare time to the study of the Persian and Hindustáni languages, in both of which he acquired considerable proficiency, and to which he subsequently added a good practical knowledge of the Telugu and Canarese languages — the languages of the districts, in the civil administration of which he was afterwards employed. It was probably to his attainments in the Oriental languages, combined with his general ability, that he owed his appointment to the Intelligence Department under Captain Read, which was followed two years later by his selection for civil employment under the same officer. But Munro's claims to advancement were by no means confined to proficiency in the native languages—a qualification which, valuable as it is when combined with others, has in India too often led to the promotion of studious men, with a turn for languages, to situations for which in other respects they were quite unfit. Munro was, from the first, a careful and sagacious observer of the events passing around him, both in Southern India and in other parts of the country; and at a very early period had formed clear and definite views as to the policy most likely to be conducive to the maintenance and extension of the British power. In opposition to the opinion which, at that time, generally found favour with the authorities, both in England and in India, he recognized the paramount importance of subverting the powerful and dangerous empire which Hyder Ali had founded in Mysore. He wrote in 1790:

It has long been admitted as an axiom in politics by the directors of our affairs both at home and in this country, that Tippoo ought to be preserved as a barrier between us and the Mahrattas. This notion seems to have been first adopted without much knowledge of the subject, and to have been followed without much consideration. It is to support a powerful and ambitious enemy to defend us from a weak one. From the neighbourhood of the one we have everything to apprehend; from that of the other, nothing. This will be clearly understood by reflecting for a moment on the conditions of the two Governments. The one, the most simple and despotic monarchy in the world, in which every department, civil and military, possesses the regularity and system communicated to it by the genius of Hyder, and in which all pretensions derived from high birth being discouraged, all independent chiefs and zemindárs subjected or extirpated, justice severely and impartially administered to every class of the people, a numerous and well-disciplined army kept up, and almost every employment of trust or consequence conferred on men raised from obscurity, gives to the Government a vigour hitherto unexampled in India. The other, composed of a confederacy of independent chiefs, possessing extensive dominions and numerous armies, now acting in concert, now jealous of each other and acting only for their own advantage, and at all times liable to be detached from the public cause by the most distant prospect of private gain, can never be a very dangerous enemy to the English.

The first is a government of conquest; the last, merely of plunder and depredation. The character of vigour has been so strongly impressed on the Mysore Government by the abilities of its founders, that it may retain it even under the reign of a weak prince or a minor. But the strength of the supreme Mahratta Government is continually varying according to the disposition of its different members, who sometimes strengthen it by union and sometimes weaken it by defection, or by dividing their territories among their children.

The nation likewise maintains no standing army, adopts none of the European modes of discipline, and is impelled by

no religious tenets to attempt the extirpation of men of a different belief. But Tippoo supports an army of 110,000 men, a large body of which is composed of slaves, called Chelas, trained on the plan of the Turkish janizaries, and follows with the greatest eagerness every principle of European tactics. He has even gone so far as to publish a book for the use of his officers, a copy of which is now in my possession, containing, besides the evolutions and manœuvres usually practised in Europe, some of his own invention, together with directions for marching, encamping, and fighting; and he is, with all his extraordinary talents, a furious zealot for a faith which founds eternal happiness on the destruction of other sects.*

Nor was the young soldier's attention limited exclusively to the affairs of India. He carefully and anxiously observed the startling revolution which was taking place in France, and noted its possible effects on the future of England and of British rule in India. His first impressions were very similar to those held alike by Pitt and Fox at the commencement of the Revolution, but he did not share their anticipations that a more popular form of government in France would improve the relations between that country and England. Writing to his friend Mr. Foulis on the 2nd of April, 1790, he described 'the restoration 'of French liberty as an event, which, as a friend 'to the prosperity and glory of Great Britain,' he 'could not behold with indifference.' In his opinion that nation, already too powerful, wanted nothing but a better form of government to render her the arbiter of Europe. He wrote:

You and I may live to see the day when the fairest provinces of India, reversing Mr. Gibbon's boast, shall not be subject to a Company of merchants of a remote island

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 96, 97.

in the Northern Ocean; but when perhaps those merchants and their countrymen, being confined by the superior power of their rival to the narrow limits of their native isle, shall sink into the insignificance from which they were raised by their empire of the sea. With the freedom of our government we may retain our orators, our poets and historians; but our domestic transactions will afford few splendid materials for the exercise of genius or fancy, and with the loss of empire, we must relinquish, however reluctantly, the idea so long and so fondly cherished by us all, of our holding the balance of power. In looking forward to the rising grandeur of France, I am not influenced by any groundless despondency, but I judge of the future from the past: and when I consider that after the Revolution she opposed for some time successfully the united naval Powers of England and Holland; that she did the same under Queen Anne and under George II. until '59; and that, notwithstanding the almost total annihilation of her marine in that war, in the east of Europe, America, and the West Indies, she never shunned and sometimes sought our fleets, and met us in this country (the East Indies), if not with superior force, at least with superior fortune and perhaps bravery; that she made all those exertions when she was left to the mercy of capricious women, who made and unmade ministers, generals, and admirals almost every month; and when commerce, and even the naval profession, met with no encouragement;—I cannot but fear that when she shall direct her attention to the sea, she may wrest from Britain her empire of that element and strip her of all her foreign possessions. When two countries have made nearly the same progress in the arts of peace and war, and when there is no material difference in the constitution of their governments, that which possesses the greatest population and the most numerous resources from the fertility of her soil, must, in the end, prevail over her rival.*

Groundless as the apprehensions have happily proved, which are embodied in the foregoing observations, it must not be forgotten that the superiority of Great Britain over a France set free

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 87.

from the shackles which had hitherto impeded her progress, had yet to be established; that the battles of the Nile and Trafalgar had still to be fought; and that the future victor at Assye and at Waterloo, whom Munro was destined to meet nine years later under the walls of Seringapatam, was still a young regimental officer, unknown to the world at large. Nor was Munro singular at that time in his dread of the power of France. The previous struggle between the English and the French in India had been long and severe, and there was nothing that Warren Hastings had regarded with greater apprehension than a renewal of that struggle.

Munro's mode of life at this time is thus described by him in a letter to his sister:

Seven was our breakfast hour, immediately after which I walked out, generally alone; and though ten was my usual hour for returning, I often wandered about the fields till one; but when I adhered to the rules laid down for myself, I came home at ten and read Persian till one, when I dressed and went to dinner—came back before three and sometimes slept half an hour, sometimes not, and then wrote and talked Persian and Moors * till sunset, when I went to the parade, from whence I set out with a party to visit the ladies or to play cards at the commanding officer's. This engaged me till nine, when I went to supper, or more frequently returned home without it, and read politics and nonsense until bedtime, which, according to the entertainment which I met with, happened some time between eleven and two. I should have mentioned fives as an amusement that occupied a great deal of my time. I seldom missed above two days in a week at this game, and always played two or three hours at a time, which were taken from my walks and Persian studies. Men

* *Moors* was in those days the name commonly applied to the Hindustáni language, or the language of the Mohamedans or *Moormen*, as the Mohamedans in Southern India are often called. In Madras Hindustáni is seldom spoken by the Hindus.

are much more boyish in this country than in Europe, and in spite of the sun take, I believe, more exercise, and are, however strange it may appear, better able to undergo fatigue, unless on some remarkably hot days. I never could make half the violent exertions at home that I have made here. My daily walks were usually from four to twelve miles, which I thought a good journey in Scotland. You see children of five or six years of age following the camp, and marching fifteen or sixteen miles a day with the same ease as their fathers.*

The life of a subaltern in India is not a very luxurious one, even at the present time; but in those days, when the pay was very much smaller than it is now, it was a life of poverty and of hardship. Munro says in one of his letters,† written after he had been nine years in the country, that he 'never experienced hunger or thirst, fatigue or poverty,' until he came to India; but that since then he had frequently met with the first three, and the last had been his constant companion. He was three years in India before he was 'master of any other pillow 'than a book or a cartridge-pouch;' his bed was a 'piece of canvas stuck on four cross sticks,' and the greater part of his journeys he had to make on foot; the only horse he possessed being so old that he was always obliged to walk two-thirds of the way. In such circumstances it is very much to his credit that he practised sufficient self-denial to enable him to send material help to his father out of his scanty income.

Munro's letters during the third war with Mysore, which, under the immediate direction of Lord Cornwallis, then Governor-General of Bengal,‡ ended with the Treaty of Seringapatam in 1792, are extremely

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 90.

† Ibid., pp. 88, 89.

‡ It was not until 1833 that the Governor-General received the official designation of Governor-General of India.

interesting; especially his account of the storming of Tippoo's lines near Seringapatam on the night of the 6th of February of that year, which practically brought the war to a close.* Munro entertained a high opinion of Lord Cornwallis's capacity as a general; but, adhering to the views he had all along held as to the necessity of completely subverting the power of Tippoo, he was much disappointed at the liberality of the terms conceded to the Mysore ruler, who was allowed to retain half his dominions. He wrote:

I am still of the old doctrine that the best method of making all princes keep the peace, not excepting even Tippoo, is to make it dangerous for them to disturb your quiet. This can be done by a good army. We have one; but as we have not money to pay it, we ought to have taken advantage of our successes for this purpose, and after reducing Seringapatam, have retained it and all the countries to the southward and westward of the Cavery.† By doing this we could have maintained a good body of cavalry, and so far from being left with a weak and extended frontier, the usual attendant of conquests, we should, from the nature of the country, have acquired one more compact and more strong than we have at present. If peace is so desirable an object, it would be wiser to have retained the power of preserving it in our own hands, than to have left it to the caprice of Tippoo, who, though he has lost half his revenue, has by no means lost half his power. He requires no

* Munro was not present on this occasion, having been employed at the time at Bangalore with a detachment engaged in forwarding supplies to the army before Seringapatam; but he made careful inquiries about the details of the assault, and wrote a clear and able account of it.

† There is a remark in one of Munro's letters on this subject, which, though written more than eighty years ago and with reference to a very different position of affairs, is extremely apposite to the controversy which has so long been going on regarding the north-western frontier of India, and which is at this moment in progress on the question of retaining Candahar. 'What are called 'the natural barriers of rivers and 'mountains seldom check an enter- 'prising enemy. The best barriers 'are advanced posts, from which it is 'easy to attack him and penetrate 'into his country.'

combination, like us, of an able military governor, peace in Europe, and allies in this country, to enable him to prosecute war successfully. He only wants to attack them singly, when he will be more than a match for any of them; and it will be strange if he does not find an opportunity when the confederates may not find it convenient to support the general cause." *

Another question upon which Munro's views were not less decided, was one regarding which difference of opinion has prevailed throughout the period of the British connection with India, and still prevails—the question of the extension of territory. His opinion was that the territorial possessions of the East India Company must be extended, if the Company was to continue to exist as a territorial power at all. He said:

Men read books, and because they find that all warlike nations have had their downfall, they declaim against conquest as not only dangerous but unprofitable, from a supposition that the increase of territory must always be followed by a proportionate increase of expense. This may be true when a nation is surrounded by warlike neighbours, which, while it gains by a province on one side, loses as much on the other; but there are times and situations when conquest not only brings a revenue greatly beyond its expenses, but brings also additional security. The kings of England knew this when they attempted the reduction of Scotland. There is, however, another example which would apply better to our position on the Carnatic. When Spain was, in the last century, engaged in a war with France and Portugal, would not the possession of the latter country have added much to her strength and security by removing every possibility of an attack except from the frontiers of France? By subduing the country below the Gháts, from Pálghátcheri to Ambúr, we have nothing to fear. The sea is behind us, and in front we gain a stronger barrier than we now have, which would

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 150, 151.

enable us to defend the country with the present military establishment; but as this, with the civil expenses, would be nearly equal to the whole revenue of the country, let us advance to the Krishna, and we shall triple our revenue without having occasion to add much to our military force, because our barrier will then be both stronger and shorter than it is now. I do not mean that we should at once attempt to extend ourselves so far, for it is at present beyond our power; but we should keep the object in view, though the accomplishment of it should require a long series of years. There is no necessity for precipitation; the dissensions and revolutions of the native governments will point out to us the time when it is proper for us to become actors. Nothing can be more absurd than our regarding any of the native governments as powers which are to last for ages. It would not be surprising if all of them were to cease to exist in the course of twenty or thirty years.*

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 138, 139.

CHAPTER II.

Treaty of Seringapatam—Cessions of territory to the Company—Military officers appointed to administer the Baramahal; Munro one of them—Captain Read—Munro's high opinion of him—Unsatisfactory character of the revenue management in the older possessions of the Company—Low standard of official morality—Inadequacy of official salaries—Lord Cornwallis's views on the subject—Instructions to Read—Depressed condition of the Baramahal—Maladministration under Hyder Ali and Tippoo—Introduction of the ryotwár system—Current misapprehensions regarding that system—Description of its real principles—Munro's views—On the importance of moderate assessments—On taxation of improvements—On special taxation of special crops—On leases—On enforcing the joint responsibility of ryots—On fixity of tenures and of assessments—Munro's life in the Baramahal—His attachment to the province—His private correspondence—Departure.

The peace concluded with Tippoo in 1792 brought Munro's military employment to a close for some years, and indeed, with the exception of two brief periods—the first during the war which, seven years later, terminated with the defeat and death of Tippoo and the extinction of his dynasty, and the second during the Pindári war of 1817 and 1818, when Munro, with the rank of brigadier-general, proved, during a short but brilliant campaign in the Deccan and Southern Mahratta country, his high qualifications as a military commander—the remainder of his life was destined to be spent in the discharge of duties of a civil character. Under the treaty of Seringapatam

Tippoo ceded to the East India Company and their allies, the Mahratta chiefs and the Nizam, a moiety of his dominions. The share of the Company consisted of the district of Malabar on the western coast, which at first was placed under the Government of Bombay; the greater part of the present district of Salem, then designated the Baramahal; and the province of Dindigal, which forms a portion of the present district of Madura. The Baramahal and Dindigal were placed under the Government of Madras; but, owing to the deficiency in that Presidency of civil servants possessing a competent knowledge of the native languages, and to the unsatisfactory manner in which the revenue administration of the older possessions of the Company under the Madras Presidency had been conducted, Lord Cornwallis resolved to employ military officers for a time in the management of the Baramahal. The chief place, with the designation of Superintendent of Revenue in the Baramahal, was given to Captain Alexander Read, under whom Munro had recently served in the Intelligence Department; Munro and two other young officers of the Madras army, Lieutenants McLeod and Graham, being appointed his assistants. These appointments were made direct by the Governor-General, and were at first intended to last only for a year, at the end of which time Collectors were to be 'appointed by Government for the said concerns 'from the list of civil servants.' The arrangement, however, continued in force until the renewal of military operations in 1799, when Read and Munro both left the Baramahal. It seems that, owing to a misunderstanding on the part of Read, caused by Munro having declined in the previous year to leave

his regiment while the war was going on, for the purpose of rejoining the Intelligence Department, Munro's appointment to the Baramahal Commission was very near not being made. Read, indeed, had applied for the appointment of another officer; but his application was not complied with by the Governor-General, and on Munro intimating to Read that he was willing to serve in the revenue line, he was at once appointed. The temporary misunderstanding did not in any way affect the subsequent relations of the two men, which were invariably most cordial. Munro's letters show that he entertained a very high opinion of Read, whom he described as 'a man whose 'conduct is invariably regulated by private honour and 'public interest, and in whom the enthusiasm in the 'pursuit of national objects which seizes other men by 'fits and starts, is constant and uniform.' 'These 'qualities, joined to an intimate knowledge of the 'language and manners of the people,' eminently qualified Read for the station which, in the opinion of his assistant, 'he filled with so much credit to 'himself and benefit to the public.' Of the estimation in which Read held Munro, the best evidence is afforded by the fact that after they had been seven years together in the Baramahal, Read, on being appointed to the command of a body of troops detached to collect supplies for General Harris's army, took Munro with him as his secretary.

The duties entrusted to Read and his assistants were very comprehensive, involving no less than the whole administration, revenue, police, and judicial, of that portion of the ceded territory which was assigned to them, comprising a tract of country one hundred and forty miles in length with an average width of

sixty miles; but their first and most important business was to settle the revenue, and especially the land revenue, which was then, as now, the most important branch of the Indian revenue. In the discharge of this duty they had little or no assistance from the arrangements which had been made in settling the land revenue in other parts of India. In Bengal the revenue settlements had been the least able of Hastings' measures, had been a source of constant controversy with his opponents in the Council, and had met with emphatic disapproval from the Court of Directors. In Madras the inefficiency of the revenue management of the Northern Sirkárs and of the Jágír, had, as we have said, induced the Governor-General to look beyond the civil service when selecting officers for the Baramahal. In the Sirkárs a considerable portion of the land was in the hands of zemindárs, who collected the revenue from the ryots or cultivators, paying a fixed sum to the Government. The zemindárs, for the most part, employed renters or farmers of the revenue, who made the collections from the ryots, and oppressed them grievously by unauthorized exactions. Renters were likewise employed by the Company's officers to collect the revenue of land not under zemindárs, a whole sirkár being sometimes let to one renter. The persons thus employed were usually strangers to the country, hangers-on of the chiefs or members of the Provincial Councils, three of which Councils, stationed at Ganjam, Vizagapatam, and Masulipatam, were vested with the superintendence of the affairs of the Sirkárs. The renters employed by these Councils appear to have abused their powers even more grossly than those under

the zemindárs. In the Jágir also, the renting system had been adopted, with very similar results to the ryots and with serious loss to the Government; and in this case the mal-administration was intensified by the intervention of a class of persons called 'dubashes,' some of them domestic servants of the European residents at Madras, who, after the invasion of the Carnatic by Hyder in 1780, purchased rights in the land at absurdly low rates, and exercised a most mischievous influence in the district.

Added to these defects of method in administering the revenues, the standard of official morality recognized by those employed to administer them, was extremely low. The salaries allowed to the members of the Provincial Councils, and subsequently to the Collectors, to whom, on the abolition of the Councils, the revenue administration was entrusted, were so small, that it had become the universal practice to augment them by unauthorized receipts, which these officers, from the nature of their duties, had ample facilities and great temptations for obtaining. The evil had attracted the attention of Clive; but it had not been corrected until it was grappled with by Lord Cornwallis, who, in the same year in which the Baramahal was ceded by Tippoo, addressed a letter on this subject to the Court of Directors. He said:

I consider it a duty to you and my country to declare that the best rules and regulations that can be framed, either by yourselves or by the governments in India, will prove totally nugatory and useless, unless you adopt, as a decided and fixed principle, that liberal salaries shall be annexed to every office of trust and responsibility, at all the Presidencies; that all perquisites shall be abolished; and that the most vigorous checks shall be established to prevent

your servants from attempting to acquire fortunes by means that are often practised, though never publicly avowed, but for the pursuit of which many of them find an almost unanswerable apology by representing the impossibility of their even existing upon their narrow and wretched public allowances. The system that has been so long and so fatally pursued in this country, of granting trifling salaries to men employed in high trust, and who are surrounded by great temptations, and of leaving them to look for their subsistence and future hope of retirement to perquisites and unavowed emoluments, is as cruelly destructive of the morals of individuals, as it is ruinous to the interests of the Company.

Warned by the unsatisfactory results of the systems tried in their older possessions, the Madras Government, on receiving charge of the Baramahal, resolved to adopt a different plan. A few years previously, there had been established at Madras a Board of Revenue, whose business it was to superintend the administration of the revenue in all its branches, and to advise the Government on all matters connected with it. The instructions issued by this Board to Read provided for the settlement being made with the ryots individually—an arrangement which was much facilitated by the fact that in the greater part of the Baramahal there were no zemindárs. The condition of the country, when Read took charge of it, was far from prosperous. Notwithstanding what Munro had written in one of the letters quoted in the last chapter, regarding Tippoo's capacity as a ruler, he had not been long in the Baramahal before he discovered that the administration of that province, both under Hyder and under Tippoo, had been oppressive in the extreme. Their system was similar to that followed by most of the native governments, and copied, as we

have seen, by the Company's Government in the Northern Sirkárs and in the Jágír, of letting out the country to renters, who pillaged the people by unauthorized exactions, but who in this case were constantly subject to have their illicit gains, or a great part of them, extorted from them by the Sultan, and were thus driven to recoup themselves by further exactions. This oppressive system had reduced the country, when delivered over to the Company, to such a state that 'a rich farmer was nowhere to be found.' 'Not one among them, perhaps, was worth one 'hundred pagodas, exclusive of his farming stock.' Scarcely one of them rented lands to the amount of fifty pagodas a year. One-half of all the farms were not above ten pagodas each, and if there anywhere appeared a farm of eighty or one hundred pagodas, though 'nominally held by one person, 'it was in fact occupied by three or four families 'of brothers or relatives.' Many of the ryots had 'not even a single bullock,' but borrowed or hired 'a pair for a short time during the ploughing 'season.' *

The first thing that Read did was to divide the province into three divisions, and to assign a division to each of his assistants, confining himself to the superintendence of their work, and to considering the measures best adapted to secure the welfare of the people and a sufficient revenue to the State. For the first year temporary arrangements were made for the collection of the revenue with the aid of such village accounts as were forthcoming, and then a survey and assessment of each division was set on foot.

* Minutes, vol. i. pp. 23, 24.

At first the intention was that the land should be let on lease for five years, and orders to this effect were sent from Madras. This was partially carried out, but long before the five years had expired, the lease system had collapsed, and was superseded by that which, with some modifications and amendments, was afterwards extended over the greater part of the Madras Presidency, and is commonly known as the ryotwár system. Regarding this system there has been, and still is, a good deal of misapprehension, even in official quarters. It is generally known that, under the ryotwár system, the revenue is collected by the Government officers direct from the ryots; but because it is necessary, for a reason which will be stated presently, to make an annual inquiry as to the extent of each ryot's holding, it is often erroneously supposed that there is an annual revision of the rate of assessment, and that the landholders have no guarantee that that rate will not be raised from year to year. The fact is that there is no annual settlement of the rate of assessment. All that is inquired into is the extent of each ryot's holding, and this is rendered necessary by the option which, under the ryotwár system, is conceded to the ryot to give up, or diminish, or extend his holding from year to year. Every registered holder of land is recognized as its proprietor, and pays the revenue assessed upon his holding direct to Government. He is at liberty to sublet his property, or to transfer it by gift, sale, or mortgage. He cannot be ejected by Government so long as he pays the fixed assessment, and he has the option of annually increasing his holding, provided that there is waste or other land

available, or of diminishing it or entirely abandoning it. In Madras, as in other parts of India where the revenue demand has not been permanently settled, the rate of assessment has been fixed for thirty years. In unfavourable seasons remissions of assessment are granted for entire or partial loss of produce. The assessment is fixed in money, and does not vary from year to year, except in those cases where water is drawn from a Government source of irrigation to convert dry land into wet, or one-crop into two-crop land, when an extra rent is paid to Government for the water so appropriated, nor is any addition made to the assessment for improvements effected at the ryot's own expense. The ryot under this system is virtually a proprietor with a simple and perfect title, and has all the benefits of a perpetual lease without its responsibilities, inasmuch as he can at any time throw up his land, or a portion of it, but cannot be ejected as long as he pays his dues. He receives assistance in bad seasons, and is not held responsible for the payments of his neighbours.*

This is the system which, originated in its main features by Read in the Baramahal, and extended in after years by the powerful advocacy of Munro, has long prevailed in the greater part of the Madras Presidency and in the adjoining Presidency of Bombay; but it was not until after the lapse of many years that it was set free from certain serious defects which, contrary to the wise views of its founders, though strictly in accordance with native ideas, were allowed to hamper its working

* The above is nearly *verbatim* the description given of the ryotwár system in the Administration Report of the Madras Presidency for 1855–56

for many years. Of these, one of the most important was the rate of assessment, which in many parts of the country constituted an unduly heavy burthen upon the ryots, and seriously retarded the prosperity of the country. Both Read and Munro appear to have been very sensible of the importance of moderate assessments. 'The great 'point in making a settlement,' wrote Munro, 'is 'the rate of assessment. All other regulations con'nected with it are of very inferior importance.' Another was the taxation of improvements effected by the ryots themselves, as, for instance, the imposition of a higher assessment upon land watered from a well constructed by a ryot at his own expense. Another was a rule which made the rate of assessment depend upon the description of the crop, exacting a higher rate in the case of the more valuable descriptions of produce. On both these points Munro, at a very early period in his revenue service, recorded opinions characterized by a statesmanlike sagacity very much in advance of his time. He said:

Nothing would more tend to secure a country from famine than numerous wells. They are so little affected by the seasons, that their crops seldom fail; they require no expensive repairs; they do not fill up, nor are they liable to be swept away by floods, or to be destroyed by an enemy, like tanks; but they enable the cultivator to resume his labour, without even waiting for rain, the moment the danger is over. Private tanks, as they would be so small, and scattered over every part of the country, would be less subject, than those of Government, to the accidental loss of their produce, and would therefore be a better security against scarcity. Had it ever been the practice under Indian Governments, instead of building tanks themselves, to have let the ryots do it, without raising their rents, there would

now have been infinitely more wet lands than there are; an equal or greater revenue from them, and without any expense to the public. If the old system of imposing an additional rent on every improvement be persevered in, the people will remain for ever poor and revenue uncertain.*

Again:

To raise less grain, and a greater quantity of the more valuable productions of the soil, seems to be the most likely method of rendering it a more profitable commodity to the farmer than it is at present; but as the cultivation of these productions is more expensive than that of grain, and as few of the farmers have much stock, every impost, every restraint, that might the least discourage them from engaging in such undertakings, ought to be done away with. All the late duties, therefore, on betel, tobacco, and other garden productions, are extremely impolitic, and can only tend to perpetuate the poverty under which the farmers have hitherto laboured.†

Munro was at first in favour of a system of leases, on the ground that the liberty of giving up or varying their holdings from year to year might tempt the ryots to abandon the cultivation of land which had been rendered to a certain extent productive, for the sake of obtaining waste land, of which there was an abundance, on favourable terms, and that, as the cultivation of waste land required more labour than that of land already brought under the plough, the produce of the country, and with it the public revenue, would be diminished; but he does not appear at any time to have attached much importance to this view, and subsequently he came round to the opinion which seems to have been held by Read at an early period, that any attempt to establish a system of

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 20. † Ibid., p. 28.

leases in the then condition of the Baramahal would be, to say the least, premature. Writing to his father on the subject in 1798, he says:

I do not myself approve of attempting to establish a general lease at once over the whole country. There are many arguments against such a measure, founded on the poverty, the ignorance, and the manners of the people, which it would be tedious to detail. I rather wish to continue the plan now followed, which consists in letting every farmer please himself: he may take as much or as little land as he pleases every year; he may reject his old fields and take new; he may keep a part of the whole for one year or twenty, as he finds it most convenient; and as every field has a rate of assessment which never varies, he knows perfectly what he has to trust to, and that his rent can never rise or fall but exactly in proportion to the extent of land he occupies. All that is required of him is, that he shall give notice, between the 12th of April and the 12th of July, of whatever land he means to relinquish, in order that it may be given in these months, which are the principal seasons of cultivation, to any other man who wants it. If he fails in this, he is obliged to pay the rent for the ensuing year. By persevering in this system the farmers would soon know how much land they could manage; they would cease to abandon whatever fields they had in any degree improved; and this practice, which would answer every purpose of a lease, would gradually extend over the whole country. If we endeavour to establish the lease anywhere at once, it could not be permanent; for ignorance and inexperience, both on our side and on that of the farmers, would lead many of them into engagements which they would not be afterwards able to fulfil.*

Another point on which Munro at one time advocated a rule which has long ceased to form one of the regulations of the ryotwár system, was that of enforcing upon the ryots of a village a joint responsibility for the failures of individual ryots.

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 226.

This rule was in conformity with the long-established practice obtaining under native governments. Read doubted its justice. Munro held that it was not unjust, and that, without such a rule, there could be no certainty of collecting the revenue. He argued that 'if it was not unjust to raise a land-rent* 'to answer the demands of Government, or even to 'increase this rent on particular emergencies,' it could 'not be regarded as more unjust to collect 'the deficiencies of the fixed revenue by a second 'assessment.' 'The increase of revenue and the 'levy of the deficiency are both taxes of the same 'nature to the inhabitants. They are somewhat 'more than they had expected to have been called 'upon for; but as they are raised by a measure 'which has no partiality in its operation, but is the 'same to all men, they may be disagreeable, they

* Munro, frequently in his earlier papers, and occasionally in his later ones, uses the term 'rent,' when 'revenue' or 'assessment' would seem to be the more appropriate term. Indeed, in one of his Minutes he goes so far as to apply the term 'house-rent' to a tax on houses in force in the districts of Cuddapah and Ballári (Minutes, vol. i. p. 102). In using this language he apparently had in view the fact that in India the Government has invariably been recognized as in a certain sense the lord of the soil, or, to state the matter more precisely, that by the ancient law of the country the ruling power is entitled to a proportion of the annual produce of the land, or to the equivalent of that proportion in money. In one of his Minutes, written when Governor of Madras, Munro defines the relative positions of the ryot and the Government in these words: 'The ryot is certainly 'not like the landlord in England, 'but neither is he like the English 'tenant. If the name of landlord 'belongs to any one in India, it is to 'the ryot. He divides with Govern-'ment all the rights of the land. 'Whatever is not reserved by Govern-'ment, belongs to him. He is not 'a tenant at will or for a term of 'years. He is not removable because 'another offers more. The case, it is 'true, sometimes happens, but it is 'always regarded as one of injustice. 'He holds his land, or putkutt, by 'inheritance, as long as he pays the 'public assessment upon it. That 'assessment has, under the native 'princes, always fluctuated and been 'a great bar to improvement. It is 'our object to limit the demand upon 'his land, to secure him in the 'possession of it, and thus to render 'it a valuable property.'

'may be even oppressive, but they cannot be deemed 'unjust.' *

We have said that Munro was a staunch advocate of moderate assessments. He was equally in favour of fixity in the rate of assessment, so far as this could be conceded with a due regard to the necessities of the State. Indeed, he has sometimes been cited as a supporter of permanent assessments, but there is more than one passage † in his Minutes which shows that when referring to assessments of the land revenue, he used the term 'fixed' in a qualified sense, and that he was not in favour of such a permanent settlement as would preclude the Government from raising the assessment in money under any circumstances whatever; such, for instance, as precludes an enhancement of the money assessment in the zemindári districts of the Lower Provinces of Bengal. The rise which has taken place of late years in India in the value of produce, as estimated in silver, was not one of the contingencies

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 44. The following observations in defence of this rule occur in a letter written by Munro to Lord William Bentinck, then Governor of Madras, on the 10th of June, 1805:—'It would for many 'years be necessary to make the 'ryots of each village collectively 'answerable for individual failures, 'and small districts generally for the 'losses of their several villages. The 'assessment for deficiencies should be 'limited to 10 per cent. in the village, 'and to 5 per cent. in the district. 'This joint responsibility is intended 'rather to guard against fictitious, 'than to recover real losses. The 'extreme aversion of the ryots to an 'assessment for the failures of others 'is the best check upon the claims 'of pretended poverty; for, as they 'know the circumstances of each 'other, they inform against every 'man who asks a remission without 'good cause. If there were no collective responsibility, the demands 'for remission would be endless. By 'keeping it as a check, it is seldom 'necessary to use it to any great extent. The measure would become 'less and less necessary every year 'after the establishment of a permanent assessment, and whenever 'the circumstances of a country were 'so much improved that land could 'be sold for balances of rent, it could 'be done away.'

† Ibid., vol. i. p. 11, footnote; also p. 275.

thought of when Munro's Minutes were written; but there can be little doubt, if we may judge from the general tenor of his writings, that while strongly opposed to any policy which might diminish security of tenure or check the application of capital to the land, Munro would have been in favour of a revision of the money assessment when, owing to a depreciation in the value of the currency, or to any other cause, the assessment ceased to be a fair equivalent of the share of the produce to which, by long prescription, the State was entitled, or which was demanded by its financial requirements.

Munro's life in the Baramahal was a life of incessant labour. He described the system of revenue management as one of 'plain hard labour,' alleging that whatever success had attended it, was to be 'ascribed to this talent alone,' and that it must be 'unremittingly exerted, not so much to make collections, as to prevent them by detecting the 'authors of private assessments. We have only 'to guard the ryots from oppression and they will 'create the revenue for us.' He wrote:

I go from village to village in my tent settling the rents of the inhabitants, and this is so teazing and tedious a business that it leaves room for nothing else; for I have no hour in the day that I can call my own. At this moment, while I am writing, there are a dozen people talking around me. It is now twelve o'clock, and they have been going and coming in parties ever since seven in the morning, when I began this letter. One man has a long story of a debt of thirty years' standing, contracted by his father; another tells me that his brother made away with his property when he was absent during the war; and a third tells me that he cannot afford to pay his usual rent, because his wife is dead, who used to do more work than his best bullock. I am obliged to listen to all these relations, and as every man has

a knack at description, like Sancho, I think myself fortunate when I get through any one of them in half an hour. It is in vain that I sometimes recommend them to begin at the end of the story. They persist in their own way of making me full master of all the particulars; and I must, after making my objections and hearing their replies, dictate answers in the same style to them all, so that I cannot be sure that this letter will be ready to go by the next ship.*

But, incessant and laborious as his duties were, there was much in Munro's life in the Baramahal that he found extremely enjoyable. The country is picturesque and the climate agreeable during several months of the year. He was not a sportsman, but he was fond of all other country pursuits. He was an indefatigable walker, and had a keen appreciation of beautiful scenery. At Dharmapúri, the head-quarter station of one of the districts under his charge, he made a garden, which was a great source of interest and amusement to him, and to the loss of which he refers pathetically in one of his letters after he had left the Baramahal.† The proximity of that country to the Carnatic, where most of his old friends were stationed, was also a great attraction to him, as giving him opportunities of meeting them from time to time.

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 197, 198.

† 'It is a romantic country, and 'every tree and mountain has some 'charm which attaches me to them. 'I began a few years ago to make a 'garden near Dharmapúri, sheltered on 'one side by a lofty range of mountains, 'and on the other by an aged grove of 'mangoes. I made a tank in it about 'a hundred feet square, lined with 'stone steps; and the spring is so 'plentiful, that besides watering abun- 'dantly every herb and tree, there is 'always a depth of ten or twelve feet 'of clear water for bathing. I have 'numbers of young orange, mango, and 'other fruit trees in a very thriving 'state. I had a great crop of grapes 'this year; and my pine beds are now 'full of fruit. When I happened to 'be at Dharmapúri I always spent at 'least an hour every day at this spot; 'and to quit it now goes as much to 'my heart as forsaking my old friends' (Letter to his sister, dated Darya Daulat Garden, Seringapatam, 30th June, 1799).—Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 243.

During all these years Munro continued with unabated vigour his correspondence with his family and friends. Indeed, some of the most interesting of his private letters are among those which he wrote from the Baramahal. In those days the overland route had not come into use, and letters from India took some six months, on the average, in reaching England. The opportunities for sending them were also, of course, far less numerous than they are now. As a general rule, therefore, the letters from India were longer than the overland letters of the present day. Indeed, the weekly post between England and India may be said to have had the same effect upon Indian correspondence that the penny post has had upon English letter-writing, viz. that while correspondence has enormously increased, letter-writing as an accomplishment has ceased to exist. Munro's letters were decidedly long, but they were extremely interesting, and written, as they invariably were, in a clear and legible hand, must have been very charming letters to receive. Those to his father, from some of which extracts have been given, relate almost exclusively to his official duties, to the condition of the country in which he was employed, and to questions of public policy. They constitute a most valuable supplement to Munro's official correspondence. Those to his sister deal with a different description and a greater variety of topics. They treat of the incidents and prospects of his private life, of marriage, of the books he had been reading, and of the popular topics of the day, and they reveal a fund of humour and imagination for which probably few persons who had only a superficial acquaintance with the writer would have given

him credit; for Munro appears throughout his life to have been somewhat reserved in his manner to strangers and ordinary acquaintances, although quite the reverse with his intimates. The following are extracts from letters written to his sister in 1795. They express, in a vein of lively and sarcastic humour, the contempt which he felt for unpractical theories and crotchets of every description. It is evident that had he lived in the second half of the nineteenth century, he would have had no sympathy with, or toleration for, the principles of the Peace Society.

All nations are now, it seems, to be of one family, and we are to have no more quarrelling, no more fighting, except intellectual combats; and every man of us is to cultivate philosophy and the arts, and to talk of nothing but urbanity, and humanity, and gentleness, and delicacy, and sympathy, and love—every desert spot is to be converted into a garden, and the whole face of the earth is to swarm with the sons and daughters of reason and liberty. What then? Suppose all these fine things realized, shall we have changed for the better? Let agriculture and manufactures be carried to their utmost possible extent, where does it all end, but in our being more effeminate in our dress, and more epicurean in our food than we are now? We must also admit that the increase of the population has kept pace with the improvement of the arts; and that the whole face of the country will be covered with habitations, except what is required for the purposes of agriculture; but this cannot be a very extensive space, for as the earth will then be forced to yield at least an hundred fold more than at present, I reckon an area of twenty feet square a very ample allowance for each person. This is making a very great concession; for you know that every inch of dry land might be covered with houses, and the inhabitants, by having terraced roofs, might on the top of them raise food enough for their sustenance, as was formerly done by the Babylonians in their hanging gardens; but as I wish, contrary to the practice of the learned, to be moderate in argument,

I give you twenty feet square for your maintenance and recreation. What will be the consequence of this advanced state of society? We shall not be able to walk out without being jostled on all sides by crowds of enlightened men and women. All the sports of the field and all rural pleasures will be at an end. There will be no rambling across the meadows, for every man will fence his territorial possessions of twenty feet against all intruders. There will be no hunting or shooting, for all wild animals will have been destroyed; and there will be no fishing, because every living thing in the rivers will have been poisoned by manufactures. There will be no poetry, no silence, no solitude; and if, by chance, some genius should arise and invoke the muse, he will sing more of being lulled to sleep by the clattering of fulling-mills and other machinery, than by the whispering of the zephyrs, or the sweet south, upon a bank of violets. The hard-handed peasant will then wear dogskin gloves, silk stockings, and a solitaire, and be wrapped in silk from top to toe like a cocoon; and as the plough will then, by the power of machinery, go by itself, he will look at its motions, mounted on the horse which in these barbarous times would be employed in drawing it. And the rich man, dressed in the finest stuffs that art can produce, will sit in his marble palace gasping for fresh air; for amidst the steam of human bodies, and the smoke of engines and workshops, it will be impossible to get a mouthful, unless by going to the sea. When the world, by the progress of knowledge, shall come to this pass, if the art of war, after being lost for many ages, is again discovered, it will be hailed as a noble invention, and the author of it will perhaps receive the honours of the Pantheon, for giving elbow-room to the half-stifled inhabitants of the globe, by such ingenious machinery as fire-arms, instead of its being effected by pestilence and famine; it will no doubt be considered as a learned profession, and probably be classed as one of the branches of the medical art. Now, supposing that the economists have accomplished their great plan of filling the world with farmers and manufacturers, and made the whole face of the earth one great city, it does not appear that the more important end of increasing the happiness of mankind would be attained. . . .

I am still of opinion that war produces many good con-

sequences: those philosophers who prophesy that the millennium is to follow universal civilization, must have shut their eyes to what is passing in the world, and trusted entirely to intellectual light; otherwise they would have seen that in proportion to the progress of science and the arts, war becomes more frequent and more general, and this I consider to be the true end of civilization. In former ages of barbarity and ignorance, two petty States might have fought till they were tired, without one of their neighbours minding them, and perhaps without those who were at a little distance ever hearing anything of the matter; but in these enlightened times of mail-coaches and packet-boats, no hostility can be committed in one corner of Europe but it is immediately known in the other, and we all think it necessary to fall to immediately. I should be glad to know in what uncivilized age a fray in Nootka Sound would have produced a bustle at Portsmouth. Barbarous nations, when at war, generally returned to their homes at the harvest season and took the field again in the holidays, to fight by way of pastime, and they were not afraid to leave their towns with no other guard than their women, because no other nation was supposed to be concerned in their quarrel; but now, by the happy modern discovery of the balance of power, all Europe is fraternized—every nation takes at least as much interest in the affairs of other nations as in its own, and no two can go to war without all the rest following their example.

We are not, like barbarians, contented with one or two campaigns; the riches of commerce and the improvement of science enable us to amuse ourselves much longer, and we are now seldom contented with less than seven. Why do our men of genius speculate, and our manufacturers toil unceasingly, but that we may collect money enough to treat ourselves now and then to a seven years' jubilee of warfare? The only instance in which civilized is less destructive than barbarous war, is in not eating our prisoners; but this I do not yet despair of seeing accomplished, for whenever any philosopher or politician shall demonstrate that eating prisoners will improve the cotton manufacture, or augment the revenue, an Act of Parliament will soon be passed for despatching them as soon as possible. War is to nations what municipal government is to particular cities: it is a grand

police which teaches nations to respect each other, and humbles such as have become insolent by prosperity.

If you are not satisfied with political arguments, I shall give you some of a higher nature. Do not all religious and orthodox books insist strongly on the manifold benefits resulting from the chastisement and visitations of stiff-necked and stubborn generations? Now, what better visitation can you wish for than forty or fifty thousand men going into a strange land and living there at free quarters for two or three years? Don't you think that the calamities of the American War have made us more virtuous than we were, and that more Britons have gone to heaven since their chastisements, than they did in all the preceding part of the century? And I therefore, for my own sake, thank Providence that such a visitation happened in my life. It is in vain to look for the termination of war from the diffusion of light, as it is called. The Greeks and Romans in ancient times were, and the Germans, French, and English in modern times are, the most enlightened and warlike of nations; and the case will be the same till the end of the world, or till human nature ceases to be what it is. As long as nations have different governments and manners and languages, there will be war; and if commerce should ever so far extend its influence as that trading nations shall no longer fight for territory, they will never refuse to take up arms for cloth, and then the age of chivalry will have given place to that of economists: prisoners will no more be released on parole; the privates and subs. will be employed in coal-heaving and other works serviceable to the State, and those of superior rank ransomed; and if they are dilatory in settling accounts, they will, perhaps, be tossed in blankets of a particular manufacture to promote the circulation of cash. Those who rail against war have not taken a comprehensive view of the subject, nor considered that it mingles, in a greater or lesser degree, with the most refined of our pleasures. How insipid would poetry be without romances and heroic poems, and history without convulsions and revolutions? What would a library be with nothing but Shenstone and a few volumes of sermons? What would become of all those patriotic citizens who spend half their lives in coffee-houses talking of the British Lion, if he were to be laid to sleep by an unfortunate millennium? *

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 187 *et seq.*

Munro remained at his post in the Baramahal until February, 1799, when war with Tippoo having again broken out, and Read, who had attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel, having been appointed to command a force which was formed to reduce the adjoining district of Mysore, and to collect supplies for the army moving under General Harris against Seringapatam, Munro accompanied him as his secretary.

CHAPTER III.

Renewal of war with Tippoo—His intrigues—Appointment of the Earl of Mornington as Governor-General—Munro's views on policy towards native states—Similarity of Lord Mornington's views—Mauritius proclamation—Preparations for war—March of army against Seringapatam—Capture of fortress and death of Tippoo—Commission for settlement of Mysore—Munro appointed secretary—Commencement of intimacy with Colonel Wellesley—Their respective views on extension of British rule in India—Munro's appointment to Canara—Condition of Canara—Munro's investigation into land tenures—Oppression under Hyder and Tippoo—Private property in land—Saleable value—Excessive litigation about land—Munro's other duties—Correspondence with military commandants—With Colonel Wellesley—Paper on defences of Malabar coast—Munro's dislike of Canara, especially of climate—High opinion entertained of his services—Transfer to the Ceded Districts.

The war with Tippoo, which took Read and Munro from the Baramahal, had for some time been inevitable. Tippoo had always regarded the English with mixed feelings of hatred and dread, and since the Treaty of Seringapatam, when he was compelled to sign away a considerable portion of his territory, his hatred of the detested nation which had brought this humiliation upon him had become intensified from year to year. To the Mahomedans in the East he had given himself out as the champion of the Mahomedan faith, who was to expel the English Kafirs from India. He had sent a mission to Constantinople, and had opened communications with Zemán Shah, the ruler of Afghanistan, whom he invited to

invade India, offering to co-operate with him in a grand effort for the establishment of Mahomedan supremacy throughout the country.* At the same time he was engaged in intrigues with the Mahrattas, and was in active communication with the French, on whose help he mainly relied for the accomplishment of his designs against the English. The war would very probably have been postponed for some years, had there not been a change in the office of Governor-General, Sir John Shore, afterwards Lord Teignmouth, who had followed the Marquis of Cornwallis in the Governor-Generalship, having been succeeded by the Earl of Mornington in 1798. It was the opinion of some thoughtful men, and among others of Munro, that advantage should have been taken of the defeat of Tippoo, in 1792, to cripple his power more completely than Lord Cornwallis had deemed advisable, when he made the Treaty of Seringapatam. Writing in 1796, Munro says:

> We are now obliged to arm to prevent Tippoo from attacking some of our Mahratta friends. This was to be expected from our absurdity in leaving him so strong at the end of the last war.†. . . To save the Ráo and Scindia from being crushed by this formidable conspiracy, we are now arming and endeavouring to form a camp by drawing together the fragments of battalions scattered between Ceylon and Amboyna. What was now going forward was to be expected. It was foreseen by every man who has reflected much on Indian politics, and is the only consequence of leaving Tippoo so strong at the end of the last war.‡

Lord Cornwallis had acted on the policy—and

* His letter to Zemán Shah styled the war which he proposed to wage as 'a holy war against the infidels, poly-'theists, and heretics.' 'Please God,' he wrote, 'the English shall become 'food for the unrelenting swords of the 'pious warriors.'

† Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 212.

‡ Ibid., pp. 213, 214.

this policy had not been departed from by his successor—that it was expedient to maintain a balance of power in India by supporting Tippoo and the Nizam against the Mahrattas. Munro, as we have seen, at an early period had formed the opinion that Tippoo, and in a lesser degree the Nizam, was a power far more formidable to the English than all the Mahratta chiefs combined; and further reflection and observations as years went by only served to confirm him in this opinion. He wrote:

By applying European maxims to India, we have formed the chimerical project of maintaining the balance of power, by joining sometimes one party of Mahrattas and sometimes another, but chiefly by supporting Tippoo and the Nizam as a barrier between ourselves and the whole nation. We take it for granted that, if this fence were ever removed, they would instantly break in upon us, overrun the whole country, and drive us into the sea. I am so far of a different opinion, that I am convinced that the annihilation of both these powers would rather strengthen than weaken the security of our possessions. Experience has shown that augmentation of territory does not augment the force of the Mahrattas: it only serves to render the different chiefs more independent of the Poona Government, and to lessen the union of the confederacy. With more territory, they are not half so formidable as they were fifty years ago; but Tippoo is, what none of them are, complete master of his army and his country. Every additional acre of land and rupee of revenue increases his force in the same manner as among European nations. He introduces modern tactics and all the improvements of musketry and artillery into his army. . . . The Nizam has not followed the same plans, but an abler successor may. The present minister has evidently begun them by attempting in several instances to reduce the great jágirdárs or feudal vassals. Mussulmans, from the spirit of conquest mixed with their religion, are much more disposed than Hindus to spread among their armies all the advantages of foreign discoveries. Whenever the Nizam adopts them, he will

become the most powerful prince in India, for he has now in his dominions great numbers of excellent horses and brave men, who want nothing but discipline. He and Tippoo, with regular armies, would be far more dangerous neighbours than the Mahrattas. Their system will be conquest, that of the Mahrattas only plunder. Ours ought, therefore, be, to let the Mahrattas strip the Nizam of as much of his dominions as they please, and to join them on the first favourable occasion to reduce Tippoo entirely. When this is effected, it may be said they would turn their whole force against us; but the interests of their leaders are so various, that we should never find much difficulty in creating a division among them; and admitting the worst, that we did not succeed, their united force would be able to make no impression on us. I have seen enough of their warfare to know that they could do little in action, and that their mode of laying waste the country would be more destructive to themselves than to us, and would never effectually stop our operations. It would not hinder us from making ourselves masters of the Malabar coast, nor from re-establishing the Rájás of Udaipúr and Jaipúr, and many other princes who are impatient to recover their independence. They would soon get tired of the war, make peace with us, and resume their old disputes about the Peshwa and his minister. Their government, which was long conducted by a Peshwa, or minister, in the name of the Rájá, has for more than twenty years been held by the ministers of his minister; and they are now going to decide by the sword whether minister the first or minister the second shall usurp the sovereign power. From a government whose members are scarcely ever united—where there is a perpetual struggle for the supreme authority—which forms no French alliances—and whose armies are constituted in the same way that they were last century, we have surely much less to apprehend than from such an enemy as Tippoo. By our scheme of politics, he is to save us from Mahratta invasions, but is not to extend his dominions; but as he is always contriving means to do it, we are, at every alarm, to be at the expense of taking the field, or going to war to keep him within the bounds which we have prescribed to him; but we are never to go so far as to overturn him entirely. The consequence of all these whimsical projects will be that we

shall at last make the native powers so warlike, that in order to enable us to oppose them, we shall be obliged to sink the whole of our revenue in augmenting our armies. Any one who compares our present military establishment, King's and Company's, with what it was twenty years ago, will see how fast we are advancing to this point. The Company may flatter themselves that by their late arrangements they have set limits to their expenses on this head; but they must go on increasing, while the cause which produces them exists—a prince to meet us with regular armies in the field.*

These views were very much in accordance with the views which were formed by the new Governor-General at an early period after his nomination to the office. Lord Mornington had previously paid some attention to Indian affairs, having held a seat at the Board of Control. Touching at the Cape of Good Hope on his voyage to India, he there met Lord Macartney, who had been Governor of Madras during a great part of the second war with Mysore, Lord Hobart, who was then on his way home from the same government, and Major Kirkpatrick, at that time Resident at the court of the Nizam. He also found despatches from the Governments in India to the Court of Directors, containing the latest information regarding the position of affairs. The information which he thus received, followed as it was, shortly after his arrival at Calcutta, by the receipt of authentic intelligence from Mauritius that a proclamation had been issued in that island, then a French dependency, inviting volunteers to take service under the Sultan of Mysore in a war which he was about to wage against the English, and that a body of men, recruited for that purpose, had been despatched to the western coast of India, convinced

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 213–215.

the Governor-General that no time was to be lost in anticipating Tippoo's designs, and crippling his power far more effectually than had yet been done.* He

* Lord Mornington attached considerable importance to the correspondence which had been going on between Tippoo and the Afghan chief Zemán Shah. Writing to Mr. Dundas from the Cape of Good Hope on the 28th of February, 1798, he said: 'No 'mode of carrying on war against us 'could be more vexatious, or more 'distressing to our resources, than a 'combined attack upon Oudh and the 'Carnatic. It is not impossible that 'the late intercourse between Tippoo 'and the Zemán Shah had for its 'object, on the part of the former at 'least, some such plan of joint opera-'tion.' In the same letter he wrote: 'The balance of power in India no 'longer exists upon the same footing on 'which it was placed by the peace of 'Seringapatam. The question there-'fore must arise how it may be brought 'back again to that state in which 'you have directed me to maintain it. 'My present view of the subject is 'that the wisest course would be to 'strengthen the Mahrattas and the 'Nizam, by entering into a defensive 'alliance with the former against 'Zemán Shah, and by affording to the 'latter an addition of military strength 'and the means of extricating himself 'from the control of the French party 'at Hyderabad.' After Lord Mornington's arrival at Calcutta both these measures were proceeded with. The proposed defensive alliance with the Mahrattas failed, but Zemán Shah's projected invasion of Hindostan was prevented by an invasion of his own territories by the Persians. The subversion of French influence at Hyderabad was effectually carried out, within a few months after Lord Mornington's arrival in India, by the despatch of a British force to Hyderabad, in the presence of which the French officers were dismissed, and the native troops under their command, numbering some 14,000 men, disarmed. Munro refers to this force and its projected dispersion in one of his letters in the following terms:—

'The Nizam has for several years 'had a few corps of sepoys, officered 'by Europeans of different nations, 'but the whole commanded by Mon-'sieur Raymond. They were for a 'long time neither well paid nor well 'armed, nor were they dangerous 'either from their numbers or disci-'pline; but after the late war Ray-'mond was permitted to make new 'levies. He obtained a large tract of 'country in jágír for their mainte-'nance, and was enabled to pay them 'regularly, to clothe and arm them 'completely, and to bring them into a 'high state of order. He was soon at 'the head of 15,000 men, with a train 'of artillery; he hoisted the tri-'coloured flag on all occasions, and at 'last became formidable to his master. 'Could any strong body of French 'troops have been landed in India, it 'is most likely he would have joined 'them and Tippoo against the English 'and the Nizam; but whatever his 'projects might have been, he, for-'tunately for us, died in the midst of 'them, about two months ago. He has 'left no successor of equal ability or 'influence; and as the different com-'mandants have various interests, and 'show but little deference to their 'present chief, the Nizam has, either 'of himself, or by the interference of 'the Supreme Government, conceived 'the design of breaking them alto-'gether, or, at least, of disbanding all 'the corps that are suspected of being 'under French influence. A strong de-'tachment has been formed in Guntúr, 'to march in case of necessity to 'Hyderabad. The sooner they move 'the better, for no time ought to be

at once ordered preparations to be made for war.* Owing to the scattered position and insufficient strength of the Madras troops available for an expedition against Mysore, and the utter want of transport and commissariat, some delay unavoidably occurred; but under the energetic supervision of the Governor-General, who repaired to Madras at the end of the year for the purpose of assuming the immediate direction of the political and military arrangements, an army of 20,000 men was collected at Vellore early in February, 1799, and was supplemented by a force of 13,000 men furnished by the Nizam, under the command of Colonel Arthur Wellesley; while another force of 6400 men was ordered to co-operate from the Bombay side, besides smaller bodies under Colonels Read and Brown.† The com-

'lost in destroying this party so 'hostile to our interests in the Deccan. 'Raymond owed the rapid increase of 'his power to the weak, timid policy 'of ——, who might have suppressed 'it in the beginning, if not by re-'monstrance, at least by menace; but 'he chose rather to sit and view its 'progress quietly than to do anything 'to risk, or what he thought was risk-'ing, hostilities.'

The disbandment of the troops under French command was accompanied by the establishment at Hyderabad of a British subsidiary force, which, under the command of Colonel Wellesley, took part in the final campaign against Tippoo. This force, composed partly of British and partly of native regiments of the Madras army, has been ever since maintained at Hyderabad, under the designation of the Hyderabad Subsidiary Force. To meet the cost of its maintenance, the districts of Ballári, Cuddapah, etc., now known as the Ceded Districts, were ceded to the East India Company in 1800.

* The Governor-General was debarred by an Act of Parliament passed in 1793 from either declaring war, or commencing hostilities, or entering into any treaty for making war, against any of the country princes or states in India, except in the case of hostilities having been commenced or hostile preparations having been made by a native prince. Lord Mornington regarded the Mauritius proclamation—the genuineness of which he considered to have been established—as affording sufficient evidence that Tippoo was engaged in making hostile preparations against the English, and this was the view taken by the President of the Board of Control. The opinion of the Court of Directors was more guardedly expressed; but their orders conveyed the requisite authority to the Governor-General to declare war, if he was satisfied of Tippoo's hostile intentions.

† While the preparations were in progress, intelligence was received of the invasion of Egypt by Bonaparte, and shortly afterwards of Nelson's

mand of the whole was entrusted to General Harris, the Commander-in-Chief at Madras. On the 4th of May the war was practically brought to an end by the capture of Seringapatam and the death of Tippoo, who was killed in the assault.* Read's force was not present at the taking of the fortress, having been left behind the main body of the army for the purpose of reducing various small forts in their rear and collecting supplies. It was subsequently employed in taking possession of Bangalore and other forts; but early in June Munro left it and returned to Seringapatam, having been nominated one of the secretaries to the Commission appointed by the Governor-General to consider and arrange measures for the future disposal of the Mysore territory, and to settle other questions arising out of the recent conquest. The Commission consisted of General Harris, Colonel Barry Close, Colonel Arthur Wellesley, Mr. Henry Wellesley, and Colonel Kirkpatrick—Captain (afterwards Sir) John Malcolm was Munro's colleague as secretary. The labours of the Commission, conducted in close correspondence with the Governor-General, who had remained at Madras for

victory over the French fleet at the mouth of the Nile. The latter intelligence did not induce Lord Mornington to relax his preparations, he being, as he wrote, 'still uncertain 'of the fate of the French army in 'Egypt, and ignorant whether an additional force might not have been 'intended to co-operate with it in 'India, by the ordinary passage round 'the Cape of Good Hope.'

* The invasion of Mysore had been preceded by several communications between the Governor-General and Tippoo, whose answers were throughout evasive, and who, while disavowing all hostile intentions, was corresponding with the French Government at Paris, with the Mahrattas, and with the Afghan ruler, Zemán Shah. Tippoo's reply to the last letter written by the Governor-General before ordering the army to march, stating in detail the evidence he possessed of Tippoo's hostile intentions, and admonishing him to receive an officer (Major Doveton) whom Lord Mornington proposed to send to confer with him, was to the following effect:—'Being 'frequently disposed to make excur'sions and hunt, I am, accordingly, 'proceeding on a hunting excursion. 'You will be pleased to despatch 'Major Doveton slightly attended.'

the purpose of superintending their work, resulted in the treaty of partition which divided the Mysore territory between the East India Company and the Nizam, and the subsidiary treaty which made over a considerable portion of the Company's share to a member of the old Hindu dynasty subverted by Hyder Ali, but now revived in the person of the late Maharájá of Mysore.

It was while employed on this Commission that Munro was first brought into close intercourse with the future Duke of Wellington, then Colonel Arthur Wellesley, with whom he contracted a lasting friendship. There were many points of resemblance in the characters of the two men. Simple in their habits, practical and clear-sighted in their views, earnest in the discharge of duty, cordially detesting everything that savoured of sham or pretension of whatever description, it was hardly possible that they should be brought much together without being speedily inspired by sentiments of mutual regard and esteem. And similar as they were in character, there was enough difference in the views which they held on some subjects, to give zest to their intercourse. Munro, at this period of his life, was an ardent supporter of the policy of extending British rule in India. His observation of the effects of native misgovernment in the Baramahal, his patriotic desire for the aggrandizement of his country, and the poor opinion which he entertained of the power of most of the native states—all impelled him to advocate the extension of British rule whenever and wherever opportunity offered. The resolution of the Governor-General to set up another native dynasty in Mysore, notwithstanding

the conditions annexed to the measure, whereby, in the words of Lord Mornington, 'the most unqualified community of interests was established 'between the Government of Mysore and the Company,' and the Rájá was placed in a position of strict dependence upon the Government of British India, was viewed by Munro with but little satisfaction. If he had had any voice in the decision of the question, he 'certainly would have had no Rájá of 'Mysore, in the person of a child dragged forth from 'oblivion, to be placed on a throne on which his 'ancestors, for three generations, had not sat during 'more than half a century.' * Colonel Wellesley, on the other hand, appears to have been favourable to the arrangement, and though by no means opposed to the general policy of his brother, which was essentially the reverse of a policy of inactivity, he regarded, perhaps, with greater apprehension than Munro the consequences of moving too rapidly.

In one of his letters addressed to Munro in the following year, he writes: 'I fancy you will have the 'pleasure of seeing some of your grand plans carried 'into execution.' In another the following sentence occurs: 'This is expensive, but if you are deter'mined to conquer all India at the same moment, 'you must pay for it.' † We may be certain that in

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 240.

† The following is the text of the two letters in question. The original manuscripts are in the British Museum. They do not appear to have been published hitherto:—

'Camp at Hoobly,
'October 6th, 1800.

'My dear Munro,

'I have received your letter 'of the 27th September. I have been 'ordered by Government to remain for 'some time in this country, and I have 'come in order to eat rice, which I pro'pose to draw from the borders of 'Soonda without using that brought 'from Nagpore by my brinjarries. You 'will therefore perceive the necessity 'that my brinjarries should return to 'me to the northward, but I am not in a 'hurry about them, and it does not much 'signify if they do not go to Cundapore 'and Mangalore to receive their loads. 'I fancy that you will have the pleasure

those few weeks in the summer of 1799 which Munro spent at Seringapatam, there was many an argument

'of seeing some of your grand plans 'carried into execution: all I can say 'is that I am ready primed, and that 'if all matters suit I shall go off with 'a dreadful explosion, and shall pro-'bably destroy some *campoos* and '*pultons* which have been indiscreetly 'pushed across the Kistna—that is to 'say, if the river remains full.

'I have written to tell Colonel Close 'about your money which I shall want. 'The only reason why I cannot get it 'is that you are obliged to keep enough 'in your hands to pay the troops in 'Kanara, etc., till January. I have 'written to desire that a sum of 'money for that purpose may be sent 'round from Madras in one of the 'ships of the squadron, and whatever 'sum I hear that they will send I will 'draw an equal one from you. That 'is the only mode that occurs of pro-'curing the supply of money which I 'shall want in December.

'Believe me, yours most sincerely,
'ARTHUR WELLESLEY.'

'Camp at Hoobly,
'October 10th, 1800.

'DEAR MUNRO,

'Webbe informs me, in a 'letter of the 4th instant, that you 'are appointed to be Collector of 'the countries ceded to the Company 'by the Nizam, and has desired me to 'write to you to state at what place 'it will be most convenient that you 'should join me. You had better 'come here and through Soonda. I 'am sadly pressed for troops for all 'our extensive objects, and I must 'draw copiously upon Kanara in order 'to be able to make up a detachment 'at all equal to taking possession of 'the ceded countries. I shall in the 'first place want three companies for 'Nuggur from Cundapore, and eight 'companies of the 75th for Malabar, in 'lieu of five companies of the 12th 'which must go into the ceded coun-'tries. I recommend it to you, there-'fore, to keep in employment in Kanara 'all your peons. You will thus have 'plenty of troops and no enemy.

'After all my efforts to provide a 'proper detachment for the ceded 'districts, I shall be able to collect 'only one regiment of Europeans, one 'battalion and eight companies of 'Sepoys, with as many guns as they 'please. I should recommend that 'this detachment should be kept to-'gether in one body, to be thrown on 'any point where their assistance may 'be wanted; that the common business 'should be done by peons till more 'troops can be spared from other 'services. You will thus have no 'enemy.

'This is expensive, I acknowledge, 'but if you are determined to conquer 'all India at the same moment you 'must pay for it.

'Don't forget to recommend my 'brinjarries to the gentleman who you 'leave in charge of Kanara.

'Believe me,
'Ever yours most sincerely,
'ARTHUR WELLESLEY.

'Major Munro.'

The subjoined extracts are interesting as setting forth the views of the two men.

Extract from letter from Major Munro to Colonel Wellesley, dated August 14th, 1800.

'I confess for my own part that, as 'we have thought it necessary to 'appear in India as sovereigns, I 'think we ought to avail ourselves, 'not of the distresses of our neigh-'bours, but of their aggressions, to 'strengthen ourselves, and to place 'ourselves in such a situation as may 'be likely to prevent such attacks 'hereafter. Sindia has been allowed

in the Darya Daulat Palace, between the future conqueror of Napoleon and the future Governor of

'to increase his power by the subjugation of the Jaipúr and Udaipúr Rájás, and also in a great measure of the Peshwa. We want money to oppose him, and money, too, more particularly since the increase to the pay of the native troops; and if, in order to attain those objects, we retain in our possession certain territories which pour forth invaders upon us, we can hardly be charged with having violated the laws of nations. I am for making ourselves as strong as possible before the French return to India, and set Sindia at war with us after completing his demi-brigades with pretended deserters.'

Extract from letter from Colonel Wellesley to Major Munro, dated August 20th, 1800.

'My ideas of the nature of Indian governments, of their decline and fall, agree fully with yours, and I acknowledge that I think it probable that we shall not be able to establish a strong government on this frontier. Scindiah's influence at Poona is too great for us, and I see plainly, if Colonel Palmer remains there, we shall not be able to curb him without going to war. There was never such an opportunity for it as the present moment, and probably by bringing forward and by establishing in their ancient possessions Pursuram Bhow's family, under our protection, we should counterbalance Scindiah and secure our own tranquillity for a great length of time. But I despair of it, and I am afraid that we shall be reduced to the alternative of allowing Scindiah to be our neighbour upon our old frontier, or of taking this country ourselves. If we allow Scindiah to be our neighbour, or if the country goes to any other through his influence, we must expect worse than what has passed—thieves of all kinds, new Dhondees, and probably Dhondee himself again. If we take the country ourselves I don't expect much tranquillity.

'In my opinion the extension of our territory and influence has been greater than our means. Besides, we have added to the number and description of our enemies by depriving of employment those who heretofore found it in the service of Tippoo and the Nizam. Wherever we spread ourselves, particularly if we aggrandize ourselves at the expense of the Mahrattas, we increase this evil. We throw out of employment, and of means of subsistence, all who have hitherto managed the revenue, commanded or served in the armies, or have plundered the country.

'Upon all questions of increase of territory, these considerations have much weight with me, and I am in general inclined to decide that we have enough; as much at least, if not more than we can defend.

'I agree with you that we ought to settle this Mahratta business and the Malabar Rajahs before the French return to India; but I am afraid that to extend ourselves will rather tend to delay than accelerate the settlement, and that we shall thereby increase, rather than diminish, the number of our enemies.

'As for the wishes of the people, particularly in this country, I put them out of the question. They are the only philosophers about their governors that ever I met with—if indifference constitutes that character.'

From Major Munro to Colonel Wellesley, dated August 29th, 1800.

'Your arguments against extension of territory are certainly very strong, but still I cannot help thinking that you allow too much for its increasing

Madras, regarding the sanguine projects of the latter for the extension of British rule—projects which

'the number of our enemies and 'weakening our means of defence. 'There are three things that greatly 'facilitate our conquests in this 'country. The first is, the whole of 'India being not one nation, always 'parcelled out among a number of 'chiefs, and these parcels continually 'changing masters, makes a transfer 'to us to be regarded, not as a con-'quest, but merely as one adminis-'tration turning out another. The 'second is the total want of hereditary 'nobility and country gentlemen, or 'that there is no respectable class of 'men who might be impelled, by a 'sense either of honour or of interest, 'to oppose a revolution. And the 'third is our having a greater com-'mand than any of the native powers 'of money—a strong engine of re-'volution in all countries, but more 'especially in India.

'As to the enemies we create by 'driving men out of employment, I 'do not apprehend it ever can do 'us any serious mischief. We have 'already, in overthrowing Tippoo, seen 'more of it than we can ever see 'again, because his service contained 'so great a number of Mussulmans. 'Let us suppose Savanúr to fall into 'our hands: the only person almost 'in the revenue line who would suffer 'is Bál Kishan Ráo: all the headmen 'of villages would remain exactly 'as they are; ten or a dozen of 'Bál Kishan's gomashtas might be 'changed, but as we must have 'men of the same description, their 'places would be supplied by a dozen 'other gomashtas, and as the whole 'of both sets would probably be 'natives of Savanúr, the result would 'be that among the revenue people of 'the country there would be twelve 'outs in favour of the Mahrattas, and 'twelve ins in favour of the Company.

'But it may be said we should have 'the military against us. The chiefs 'would certainly be against us; but 'their resentment would be very 'harmless, because the payment of 'their men is the only hold they have 'upon them; and as the means of 'doing this would be lost along with 'the revenue, they would be left 'without troops. These troops, if 'natives of the country, either have 'land themselves, or a share of what 'is held by their fathers and brothers; 'and as the labouring part of the 'family would prefer the Company's 'government on account of being more 'moderately taxed, they would in 'most cases be able to keep the 'military part quiet. Many of the 'young men among the disbanded 'troops would find employment in 'the Company's army; and even the 'older, though they would be rejected 'themselves, would by degrees become 'attached to it by their younger 'brothers or sons entering into it. 'There is no army in India which 'supports decently, or even liberally, 'so great a number of what may be 'called the middling class of natives as 'our own. It is true it offers no field 'to your Nawábs and Foujdárs, but 'what of that? These men have no 'influence but while in office. They 'are frequently raised from nothing, 'and often dismissed without any 'reason; and the people, by being ac-'customed to see so many successions 'of them, care about none of them; so 'that although these officers, by losing 'their places, become our enemies, yet, 'as they have no adherents, they can 'do us no harm.

'Sindia is at this moment as much 'our enemy as we can make him. If 'he does not break with us, it is be-'cause he fears us, and an extension 'of territory, by giving us greater 'resources, would make him still more 'cautious. The acquisition of Sava-'núr would give us a frontier that 'would not require more troops to

Munro lived to see carried out far in excess of his early expectations, and which Wellesley only a few years later did much to further by his decisive victory over the Mahrattas at Assye. It may be a question whether, if Munro had lived in the days of Lord Dalhousie, he would have approved the annexation policy of that ruler in all its details. It may be that he would have doubted the justice of suppressing native rule in Nagpore, and the policy of annexing Oudh; but there can be no manner of doubt that the proposal to restore Mysore to native rule, after it had enjoyed for nearly fifty years the benefit of British administration—a proposal which,

'defend than our present one. But I 'have not the least doubt myself that 'from the nature of Indian governments, every inch of territory gained 'adds to our ability both of invading 'and defending. Every province that 'falls into our hands diminishes the 'force of the enemy by the loss of 'the revenue destined to support a 'certain number of troops, and it increases our force in a greater ratio, 'because the same province under us 'will pay as many troops, and of a 'much better quality. A Mahratta or 'Nizamite army invading our territory 'can make no lasting impression upon 'it; they cannot take forts, and we 'have no great feudal vassals to revolt 'to their standard. They might for a 'time ravage the country, but they 'would soon be obliged to fall back 'by their brinjarries, etc., being intercepted, and probably by disturbances 'at home. But we, in entering their 'territory, would find little difficulty 'in reducing every place that came in 'our way, and we should everywhere 'find Ráos and Bhows and Nawábs 'ready, if not to join us, at least to 'throw off their dependence upon the 'enemy.

'All that India can bring against us 'is not so formidable as the confederacy of Hyder and his Mahrattas 'was in 1780, when we had but a small 'force, with a frontier as difficult to 'defend as our present one. The increase of our resources has enabled 'us to double our army, and has given 'us an excellent body of cavalry, and 'a few more lakhs of pagodas of country will give us the means of making 'this cavalry so strong that nothing 'in India will look at them. I am 'therefore for going to the Malpurba 'in the mean time, unless you are determined on going to the Krishna at 'once, which unluckily must be our 'fate sooner or later. The business 'must be settled at Poona, and the 'territory may be said to be made over 'to us, either for a subsidy, or for the 'expenses of the war and future aid 'against new Dhondees. Sindia 'cannot well act against us in the 'peninsula, unless by usurping the 'Poona government, and then we 'should be able to bring a strong 'confederacy against him—all the 'friends of the Peshwa, the Nizam 'in order to recover the valuable 'territory he lost before the last war, 'and the Rájás of Udaipúr and 'Jaipúr, supported by the royal 'army.'

having been repeatedly negatived by the highest authorities, was eventually sanctioned in 1867—would have encountered from him an opposition not less strenuous than that which was offered to it by Lord Canning and his successor in the Governor-Generalship.

Among the territories which under the partition treaty became British, was the district of Canara, a tract lying along the western coast between Mysore and the sea, which, having been governed by successive Hindu dynasties up to 1763, was in that year subjugated by Hyder and annexed to Mysore. It was necessary at once to appoint an officer of revenue experience to administer this district, and the choice fell upon Munro. The arrangement was one which by no means accorded with Munro's personal wishes; for his desire was to return to the Baramahal, where, as his late chief, Read, was about to leave India, he naturally hoped to succeed him. Munro was, as we have seen, much attached to that country and to its people. He had laboured hard in bringing it into order, and he longed to return and complete his work. Moreover, he shrank from the separation from old friends which his removal to Canara would necessarily entail. But Munro's personal desires and the public interests were on this occasion deemed by the authorities to be incompatible. Malabar, the district adjoining Canara on the south, which had been brought under British rule in 1792 by the Treaty of Seringapatam, partly owing to the inefficiency of the arrangements made for its management by the Government of Bombay, and partly owing to the refractory and turbulent character of the petty chiefs, who were numerous in the district,

had given, and still was giving, a good deal of trouble. It was feared that the example of the unruly chiefs of Malabar would not be without its influence upon the petty chiefs and ryots of Canara, and it was felt that if order was to be introduced into the latter province, its management must be entrusted to an officer of proved firmness and capacity. Munro was not the man to decline a disagreeable duty when he was told that the public interests required him to undertake it, and as soon as his business at Seringapatam was done, he started for Canara.

The gloomy anticipations with which Munro entered upon his new charge, were not destined to be agreeably disappointed. Canara had been at one time a very thriving country, filled with industrious inhabitants, more lightly taxed than those of any other Indian province; but it had been grievously oppressed by the exactions of Hyder and Tippoo. It had been the scene of four wars, and during the latter years of Tippoo's reign misgovernment had produced insurrections, and with them a spirit of anarchy which indisposed the people to submit to settled rule. Just before Munro entered the district, one portion of it had been ravaged by the Coorgs, and another had been invaded by the followers of Dhundaji—a Mahratta adventurer who had escaped from Seringapatam, and had set the British authorities in Mysore at defiance. Jamalábád, a strong hill-fort, was in the hands of rebels, and in several parts of the district bodies of marauders of various classes were at large. Munro's earlier experiences of the ryots of Canara were by no means favourable. He met with the greatest difficulty in even commencing a settlement of the revenue, the ryots refusing to attend for the

purpose, save under certain conditions, and sending him a paper wherever he went, 'a kind of bill of 'rights,'* the terms of which they required to be conceded before they would discuss the subject of the assessment. He wrote:

The ryots themselves are a most unruly and turbulent race. This, however, without ascribing to them any naturally bad disposition, may be easily accounted for, when we know that they have twice lost the advantageous tenures by which they held their lands—once by Hyder's conquest, and now by that of the Company. Before they fell under the Mysore Government their land-tax was probably as light as that of most countries in Europe. When Tippoo's finances became totally deranged about four years ago, when he did not receive fifty per cent. of his revenue, they joined the Sirkár servants in plundering, and recovered in some measure their lost rights by being permitted to withhold twenty or twenty-five per cent. of their rents. On my arrival they wanted not only to keep what they had got, but also to get more; while I was resolved, after making allowance for the desolation of two wars, to bring the revenue back to what it had been in 1789, the last year of any regular government in Tippoo's reign, and then to leave it to Government to relinquish as much of it as they might think fit. As soon as they discovered my intention, they entered into combinations to bring me to terms. These sort of combinations had been very general under the weak and profligate set of rulers they had had since 1792. They were even encouraged; because men in office always contrived to receive something for settling them; and the inhabitants too gained their ends, in some measure, by obtaining a remission of rent on account of the loss they were supposed to have sustained from the neglect of cultivation during their temporary insurrection. They sent me proposals from all quarters, demanding, in general, a remission of all assessments since the conquest of Hyder, as the only condition on which they would agree to enter into any discussion about a settlement. I, of course, rejected all preliminaries but such as I might think it

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 61.

necessary, upon examination, to prescribe to myself. This was considered by them as a declaration of war, and they lost no time in taking the field; that is to say, they refused to come to the cutcherry. They absconded when peons were sent for them. They almost starved some of the amildárs I had detached, by preventing them from getting fire and water; and whenever I approached a village, the inhabitants went off to another, so that I was sometimes several weeks in a district without seeing one of them. Reports had been circulated among them that the country was soon to be placed under the Bombay Government; and they therefore hoped that by keeping aloof for a time, they would either see me removed, or constrain me to submit, lest the season should pass away before I could make a settlement. Perseverance on my part, however, at last brought over some deserters; and by talking to them, as your friend Cleveland would have done, they brought over more, and I am now getting on as well as I can expect; but they are such a different kind of people to any ryots to the eastward of the Gháts, that I have still but very little confidence in their engagements, and am very far from being satisfied that they will perform them—and I can hardly venture to say that I shall come within ten per cent. of the settlement: six months, however, will decide the question.*

After a time, however, patience and firmness, which were marked features in Munro's character, prevailed, and by a careful examination into the circumstances of the district, and a scrutiny into its ancient records, he was able to make a settlement, which has formed the basis of all subsequent arrangements with reference to the land revenue of Canara, now and for many years past one of the most flourishing provinces in India. The labour which Munro underwent in his investigation into the Canara land tenures and in settling the assessment, was very great. He says in one of his letters: 'In this one year I have gone through

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 274, 275.

'more work than in almost all the seven I was 'in the Baramahal.' He examined a number of ancient registers,* in which he traced the tenures and the assessments which had prevailed as far back as the middle of the fourteenth century, when Canara was subject to the Rájá of Vijayanagar, and when the assessment which formed the basis of that which he found in operation, was introduced. This ancient assessment, which was called the rekhá or shist, Munro found still written, 'not only in all 'general accounts of districts, but in those of every 'individual landholder.' Additions had been made to it by the Bednore Government, but not such as materially to affect the prosperity of the people. The amount even then would seem not to have exceeded one-fourth of the gross produce. The revenue was easily realized and outstanding balances were almost unknown. It was not until after the conquest of Hyder that any serious pressure was put upon the landholders. From that time one addition after another was made to the assessment, and the country 'was regarded as a fund from 'which he (Hyder) might draw without limit for

* Writing on the 7th of June, 1800, to his friend Mr. Cockburn, a Member of the Board of Revenue, he says: 'I wished to have traced the nature 'of landed property in Súnda, if such 'property actually existed there, by 'a chain of sunnuds up to the eighth 'century, but the sunnuds take too 'much time; many of them are in'tricate and obscure, and after trans'lating a dozen sometimes, I meet 'with nothing to illustrate the object 'of my search. Time slips away; 'business accumulates, and I am in 'danger of neglecting the present 'generation, while I am attempting 'to ascertain whether their fore'fathers were permitted to eat a 'greater proportion of the land than 'they do. With the view of clearing 'away difficulties for new men I shall 'exact the payment of balances more 'rigorously than I would have done 'had I wished to take a lease of the 'country. This will bear hard upon 'some individuals; *but where there 'has been nothing but anarchy for 'the last seven years, order can only 'be established by being inflexible— 'indulgence can be thought of after'wards.*'

'the expenses of his military operations in other 'quarters.' The whole course of the administration of Hyder's deputies is described by Munro as 'a 'series of experiments made for the purpose of 'determining the extent' to which the assessment could be raised, and 'how much it was possible 'to extort from the farmer without diminishing 'cultivation.'* Under Tippoo the state of things was even worse. He destroyed many of the principal towns near the coast, and forced their inhabitants to remove to Jamalábád and other unhealthy situations near the hills: in one night he seized all the Christian men, women, and children, numbering above sixty thousand, and sent them into captivity to Mysore. He prohibited all foreign trade, and permitted a system of corruption and disorder in all departments of his administration; and when many of the ryots had been compelled by his exorbitant exactions to abandon their holdings, he forced those who remained to cultivate, in addition to their own land, the land of those who had gone, for which they did not possess the necessary stock, thereby intensifying their difficulties and ultimately diminishing the revenue.†

Land in Canara had always been regarded as private property. Its transfer,

by sale or otherwise, was unrestrained. Nothing but gift, or sale, or non-payment of rent, could take it from the owner. If he absconded with balances standing against him, it was transferred to another person; but if he or his heir returned at ever so distant a period, it was restored, on either of them paying a reasonable compensation for the balance, and such extra expenses as might have been incurred on account of im-

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 68. † Ibid., p. 69.

provements. No crime in the proprietor could extinguish the right of the heir to the succession.*

Most of these proprietors had tenants under them with rights of occupancy more or less permanent.

Though the estates held immediately of Government were so small that the rent of each did not exceed fifty pagodas, yet the proprietors had under them an infinite number of lesser proprietors, holding their lands of them, with all the same proprietary rights as those under which they held their own of Government. It was usual for the original proprietors to rent, either for a term of years or for ever, such a portion of their lands as was sufficient to discharge the whole of their public rent, and to keep the rest in their hands. The tenants for ever became a second class of proprietors, whom nothing could deprive of their rights of possession, unless their own act of gift or sale. On failure of heirs, the lands reverted to the original superior landlord; but a reversion of the estate of the superior landlord to the sirkár did not take place if the inferior could be found.†

Much of the land in Canara had a saleable value. Munro had met with some instances in which particular fields had been sold as high as twenty-five or thirty years' purchase of the Government assessment. This state of things had been seriously altered for the worse by the misgovernment of the Mysore rulers. In many cases the ancient proprietors had become extinct. In all, the value of the rights which the landholders possessed had been seriously diminished; but what remained was 'still as much 'cherished, and the title to it as obstinately contested, 'as it ever was perhaps at any former period.'‡

Munro's earlier impressions of the actual condition of the landholders were more unfavourable than those which he was led to form on further

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 70. † Ibid., p. 71. ‡ Ibid., p. 72.

acquaintance with the district. In his first report, dated the 3rd of May, 1800, he described the landlords, who all lived chiefly on their rents, as having hardly any rent at all. 'Few of them,' he wrote, 'have sufficient to constitute of itself the 'fund of their subsistence.' * But shortly after this paper was written, he was led by facts which came under his notice to judge more favourably of their condition. His attention was attracted to the extraordinary number of suits about land; Canara in this, as in other respects, presenting a remarkable contrast to the Baramahal. In the Baramahal a dispute about land had scarcely come before him once in six months; in Canara land produced nineteen in twenty of all the complaints he had to deal with. 'The accumulated suits of 'half a century appeared to have broken loose at 'once,' † and every moment that he could spare from his ordinary business had been given to the hearing of them without having sensibly reduced their number. In making his first settlement of the district, Munro had not deemed himself at liberty, on his own authority, to reduce the assessment much below the standard which he found in operation. He had made 'no other reduction in the assess-'ment of Tippoo Sultán than such as was absolutely 'necessary in order to ensure the collection of the 'rent.' He had regarded himself merely as a Collector who was to investigate and report upon the state of the country, but he had urged upon the authorities at Madras a considerable reduction, which was sanctioned by the Government as a temporary arrangement. This recommendation he was now led

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 72. † Ibid., p. 80.

to modify, partly by the conclusions which he drew from the extent of litigation about land, partly by the facts that the assessment which he had imposed was generally paid with considerable punctuality, and that cultivation was increasing, and partly by other evidence which satisfied him that the landholders did not require the amount of relief which he had at first suggested.*

The settlement which Munro recommended for Canara, was in its leading principles ryotwár; that is to say, it was a settlement of the revenue with the actual landowners, the holders for the most part of small estates, without the intervention of any middle men in the shape of renters or zemindárs. It differed, however, from the ryotwár settlement which had been made in the Baramahal, and from that which was subsequently carried out in the Ceded Districts, in two important particulars. In the first place, the settlement was made, in many cases, not with the actual cultivator, but with a landholder, who, owing to the lightness of the assessment, was able to let a portion of his land to a tenant or tenants, from whom he received a rent, and who, as we have said, had rights of occupancy more or less permanent. In the second place, the assessment was laid, not as in the other two cases referred to, upon each field, but upon each estate or warg. In this, as in other cases, the salient features of Munro's revenue policy was to accept the existing institutions of the country as he found them, and not to introduce any alterations which were not absolutely necessary. He found in Canara a very widely established system of private property in land, which, although

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 80.

it had suffered damage from the oppression and exactions of the late rulers of the country, was still cherished and valued by the people, and his policy was, not to supersede it by any new system, but to restore and strengthen it by moderate assessments and by the impartial administration of justice. But in those days very different views obtained in the highest quarters as to the proper mode of administering the land revenues of India. The zemindári settlement effected by Lord Cornwallis in Bengal, under which the Government received the revenue from a limited number of large landholders, holding under a permanent assessment, was regarded as the model on which all revenue settlements throughout India should, as far as possible, be based, and before Munro left Canara he received orders to submit proposals for dividing the country into large estates, to which the principles of the Bengal permanent assessment was to be applied. Munro was much opposed to the arrangement. He held that although in countries where private property in land was unknown, and where the general poverty of the cultivators disabled them from making any improvement, the division of the land into large estates, and giving them away, or disposing of them for a price to men of property, where such could be found, might possibly have some advantages—in Canara, where almost all land was private property, derived from gift or purchase, or descent from an antiquity too remote to be traced; where there were more title-deeds; and where the validity of these deeds had probably stood more trials than all the estates in England, great proprietors could not be established without annihilating all the rights of the present

landlords. Nor did he believe that by any arrangement for 'placing a number of small estates under 'the collection of one landlord,' any facility of collection, or any security for revenue, would be obtained, that might not be secured by letting the estates remain as they then stood. In his opinion, any advantages that might be gained from introducing a system of great estates could only be temporary, owing to the absence of any exclusive rights of primogeniture and the consequent tendency to a subdivision of property. He wrote:

The expenses of Indian must not be measured by those of European husbandry. Exclusive of tanks, there is hardly any expense which may not be defrayed by the smallest, as easily as by the great proprietors; and even tanks themselves are unnecessary in Canara. The small estates are in general better cultivated than the great ones; and their owners are as regular as the great owners in discharging their kists.* Among the numerous instances which have come before me, of their having been violently dispossessed of their lands, or of their having fled and left them waste on account of balances under the late Government, there is not one in which these balances can fairly be attributed to the rent alone, nor in which they have not arisen from fines, anticipations, and other acts of oppression. In whatever way I view the question of great and small proprietors, I am perfectly satisfied that the preference ought to be given to small ones, and that Government ought to make its settlements immediately with them. Under such a system, the gross produce of the country will be greater, and the collection of the revenue will be as regular as under that of great landholders.†

Munro, however, invariably obeyed orders, and accordingly, after stating his objections to the arrangement proposed, he submitted a plan for giving effect

* See Minutes, vol. i. p. 85, footnote. † Ibid., vol. ii. Appendix B, p. 355.

to it, which, however, was not carried out, and, owing to a change which took place some years later in the views of the Madras Government and of the Court of Directors, was eventually abandoned.

But the settlement of the land revenue and the investigation of suits about land were not by any means the only matters which engaged Munro's attention in Canara. The disturbed state of the district, when it was first occupied, made it necessary to establish not less than fourteen different military posts in it, and Munro had to correspond with the commandants of each one of these posts. Indeed, it may be said that the general direction of the military arrangements was practically in his hands, although his military rank did not admit of his being formally invested with the command, as Read had been in the Baramahal. With Colonel Wellesley, who had been left at the head of affairs, both military and civil, in Mysore, Munro was engaged in constant correspondence, a great part of which had reference to the arrangements for provisioning the army employed under the former in his pursuit of the rebel Dhundaji. He was also required to write several elaborate memoranda, for the information of the Governor-General, regarding matters on which Lord Mornington consulted him. One of these was on the defences of the Malabar coast, with reference to the contingency of a French invasion, of which at that time there was some apprehension. The following is an extract from Munro's paper * on the subject:—

An enemy landing on this coast with an intention of pene-

* The original manuscript of this paper, in Munro's handwriting, is in the Manuscript Library of the British Museum. It does not appear to have been hitherto published.

trating into the Mysore country, while we have an army there, or even of establishing themselves below the Gháts, would find it a very arduous task; for in either case they must bring with them almost everything but rice. To penetrate into Mysore or Coimbatore, they must not only be masters of the sea for a time, but they must reduce the low country; and when this is done, they must bring tents, bazars, draught cattle, carriage and slaughter cattle, sheep, etc., from Guzerat or the Concan—countries from which, even supposing the communications to be uninterrupted, they would probably not be able to draw the supplies wanted, and certainly not within the requisite period; for they must establish themselves upon the Malabar coast, receive their supplies, and ascend the Gháts between the months of September and May, which it is utterly impossible that they could do. . . . While we are strong in Mysore, there are so many insurmountable obstacles to an invasion of that country from Malabar, that any enemy that hazards it must perish in the attempt.

It is not only impossible for an enemy to make any impression upon Mysore from that quarter, but it is almost equally so for him to take possession of the coast for any length of time, because, in order to do this, he must land as great a force as we could bring against him; but it is not at all likely that France will ever be able to do this, and if she could, she would land it on the Coromandel, and not on the Malabar coast. Supposing, however, that any body of Europeans, from 5000 to 10,000, were landed in Malabar, the only chance they would have of maintaining possession of their ground would be by getting possession of some posts which might be capable of sustaining a long siege, and by being joined by the Nair Rájás and the other petty chiefs between Cochin and Sadásivaghar. We ought therefore to have no forts of great strength on the coast of Malabar. Those which we already have, are sufficiently strong to guard against a surprise, and to resist any enemy who has no cannon, which is all that is necessary. Were the French to get possession of them, they could easily be driven out again by an army from Mysore; and as the Nairs, etc., would see that their footing was precarious, they would be afraid to join them. Were we, however, to make any place particularly strong, one of those unforeseen events which frequently

happen in war, might throw it into the power of the enemy. After they were in it, it would be difficult to dislodge them, and they might in consequence be able to stir up the neighbouring petty princes of the country to insurrection. If we wish to be secure against a foreign enemy, we ought to strengthen none of the forts on the coast. If we wish to be secure against our own subjects, we ought to disarm them.

Munro did not remain in Canara much more than sixteen months. He had never thoroughly liked the district. He greatly disliked the climate, which is extremely relaxing, and although he had considered it his duty to undertake the charge when pressed upon him on public grounds, he had from the first expressed a wish to be removed to some other part of the country, as soon as he should have succeeded in introducing a settled system of revenue, and substituting order for the anarchy which Tippoo's *régime* had left behind it. To Munro, who had been accustomed to the drier climates of the Carnatic and the Baramahal, Canara, with its damp and steamy atmosphere and long rainy season, was as distasteful as Calcutta is to the Punjáb official of the present day. With all his love for beautiful scenery, which may be said to abound in all parts of Canara, Munro seems to have been to the last unable to acquire any enthusiasm for a country in which there are five months of almost continuous rain, and where the difficulties of locomotion, even now considerable, were at that time unusually great.

No man (he wrote) who has not seen Canara and Súnda, can have the least idea of the endless vexatious interruptions the nature of the climate, of the country, and of the people oppose to the progress of revenue settlements. From the beginning of June to the end of October, the proper season for settlements, there is no certainty of a fair day. No wheel

carriage can be used, not even a bullock bandy. In many of the inland cross-roads bullocks cannot travel loaded, and tents must be carried by coolies. My cutcherry tent stands pitched at Bárkúr, where I first got it. I could only bring with me two very small captain's marquees and three private tents. How, you will ask, does your army move? It usually sends its tents by sea, marches along the coast, and occupies the houses of the inhabitants. If it moves inland, as it did to Jamalábád, it marches parallel to the course of the rivers, and probably only crosses one. The large tents are then carried on elephants; but an elephant would not answer my purpose, because I never move without crossing a river, and often two or three. The business of loading and unloading him would take up the whole day. Even with bullocks, the business of swimming them over takes up so much time, that I am always obliged to wait an hour or two for my tent, the same as if I was in camp. It cannot be sent on the night before, because it is both difficult and dangerous in small canoes to pass rivers in the dark, towing cattle alongside. If I send it on the day before, I lose the use of it for my cutcherry people. . . . Peons, on account of rivers and also the number of thieves, travel only in the day, and not more than twelve or thirteen miles on an average. They seldom come in less than fifteen days from Mangalore. The tappál * does not go thirty miles a day, and letters by it, though they are sometimes more expeditious than peons, are sometimes again much longer in reaching, either from mistakes in the department or from my being out of the road, and the people missing me. My correspondence with the more distant districts is much more tedious than that between Madras and Bengal. It would be much easier for me to manage all the countries between the Krishna and the Colleroon than this Collectorate.†

It is not surprising that, with so great an aversion to Canara, Munro should have sought for a change as soon as he had accomplished the principal objects of his mission. Towards the end of 1800, the change came in the shape of a transfer to the charge of the

* *Tappál*, the post. † Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 258.

districts south of the Tongabadra, which had just been ceded to the Company by the Nizam. It was not without reluctance that the Madras Government sanctioned this transfer. Munro's services in Canara were very highly valued. He had in a wonderfully short time put down crime and rebellion, and substituted settled government for anarchy and disorder. It was not an easy matter to replace him. But the management of the newly ceded country was a task not less arduous than that which Munro had accomplished in Canara, and it would have been difficult to find another man equally qualified for it. Accordingly, it was resolved to divide Canara into two charges, each under a separate Collector, and to appoint Munro Principal Collector of the Ceded Districts.

CHAPTER IV.

The Ceded Districts—Their extent—Political history—Weakness of the Hyderabad administration—The poligárs—Their reduction—Settlement of the land revenue on a ryotwár basis—Detailed field survey and assessment—Laboriousness of Munro's duties—High reputation acquired by him—Estimation in which he was held by the people—Opposition to the ryotwár system in Bengal and Madras—The system temporarily superseded—Review of the arguments for and against it—Actual results of the two systems—The second Mahratta war—Correspondence between General Wellesley and Munro about battle of Assye—Mutiny at Vellore—Munro's previous apprehensions regarding the undue preponderance of native over European troops.

MUNRO entered upon his new charge when the first year of this century was drawing to a close. The territory which he was deputed to administer, was a very extensive one. It comprised an area little short of twenty-seven thousand square miles, including the present districts of Ballári, Cuddapah, and Karnúl, and also the Palnád, now a táluq or subdivision of the Krishna district. Karnúl was at that time a principality under a Mahomedan chief, a tributary of the Nizam, whose rights over Karnúl, as well as over the remainder of the Ceded Districts, were transferred to the Company. With the internal administration of this principality the Company's representative had little or no concern, so long as the tribute was regularly paid, and so long as there was an absence of such

disorder as might threaten the peace of the adjoining districts. But in the adjoining districts,* or rather provinces, of Ballári and Cuddapah, which constituted the remainder of the Principal Collector's charge, and which included an area of twenty-one thousand square miles, there were elements of work sufficient to tax the powers and to engage the unremitting attention of the ablest administrator. If Canara had suffered from thirty-six years of misgovernment by Hyder Ali and Tippoo, the Ceded Districts had been for upwards of two centuries a scene of successive invasions and a constant prey to internal conflict and misrule. From the middle of the fourteenth to the middle of the sixteenth century these provinces had formed a part of the Hindu kingdom of Vijayanagar, which in the early part of the sixteenth century appears to have included the whole of the peninsula south of the river Krishna. That dynasty, as we have seen, had established in Canara a system of landed tenure which had secured the prosperity of the country, and enabled it to pass through the period of Mysore misgovernment without very serious damage. But the rule of the Vijayanagar Government over the Ceded Districts was brought to an end in 1564, when the Hindu king was defeated by a confederacy of the Mahomedan chiefs of Bíjapúr, Golconda, Daulatábád, and Berár, and the greater part of the Ceded Districts fell into the hands of a number of petty chiefs, called poligárs. In 1680 these districts were invaded and a portion of them conquered by Sivají, the

* The term "district," which is now the official designation of the collectorates, or zillahs, into which the several Presidencies or Provinces are divided, is generally applied by Munro to the smaller divisions, now commonly called táluqs.

founder of Mahratta rule. Subsequently they were invaded by Árangzíb, and later they formed part of the viceroyalty of the Nizam of the Deccan, until in 1778 they fell to the arms of Hyder Ali, and were incorporated in the kingdom of Mysore. By the treaty of 1792 the greater part of the Ceded Districts reverted to the Nizam, and the remainder was included in the share of Tippoo's dominions which was allotted to the Nizam in 1799. The Hyderabad administration was extremely weak, and the country was kept in a state of continual disturbance by the rebellious poligárs, who set the Government at defiance. These poligárs were petty chiefs, who from time to time had acquired power and territory owing to the weakness of the ruling prince. Some of them had begun as leaders of banditti, who, on the principle of set a thief to catch a thief, had been invested with police authority. Others were descendants of the ancient Rájás or their principal officers. Others had been granted villages as a reward for services. Others had gained possession of tracts of country by usurpation. Others had begun as rulers of districts or as revenue officers, and some as mere headmen of villages. In one of his first letters after assuming his new charge, Munro wrote:

We have now a great empire in the southern part of India; and if we can only keep the French out at the general peace, it will, after remaining as long undisturbed as Bengal has now been, yield a very noble revenue, drawn with ease from willing subjects. But before such a desirable change can be effected, we shall have to remove many powerful and turbulent poligárs, and many petty ones of modern origin, who have taken advantage of the troubles of the times, in order to withhold their rents for a few years and then to declare themselves independent. The reduction of these vagabonds, who are a

kind of privileged highwaymen, will render us more able to resist our external enemies; for in all late wars we have been obliged to employ a great number of troops to secure internal tranquillity, instead of sending them to augment the army in the field.*

Again:

The country is overrun with poligárs. I have between twenty and thirty who send me vakíls. They are not confined to one corner, but are in every district. I am trying, with the help of Dugald Campbell, General of Division here, to get rid of as many as possible; but it will take some campaigns to clear them out.†

Latterly the evil had been intensified by the weakness of the Nizam's administration.

In that part of the Ceded Districts which fell to the Nizam, his officers, from indolence and weakness, were utterly unable to cope with the poligárs. They were constantly in rebellion, and their rebellion and their reduction were alike disastrous to the country. The Mysore system,‡ which removed all poligárships, expelled their turbulent chiefs, and levied an additional body of troops to prevent their return, was in every respect preferable to that of the Nizam, which at a greater expense suffered them to retain their power, to commit every kind of degradation, and to set the Government itself at defiance.§

Nor were the turbulence and excesses of the poligárs the only source of trouble. The troops of the Nizam, with their pay in arrears, as is so often

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 337.

† Ibid., p. 349.

‡ The following allusion to the Mysore system of dealing with poligárs occurs in a letter from Colonel Wellesley to Munro, dated 26th October, 1800:—

'I think Pournaya's mode of dealing with these Rajahs (Harponelly 'and Anagoondy) is excellent. He 'sets them up in palanquins, elephants, 'etc., and a great sowarry, and makes 'them attend to his person. They 'are treated with great respect, which 'they like, but they can do no mischief 'in the country. Old Hyder adopted 'this plan, and his operations were 'seldom impeded by poligár wars.'

The poligár of Anagoondy (properly Anagundi) was a descendant of the old Rájás of Vijayanagar.

§ Manual of the Bellári District, compiled under the orders of the Madras Government, p. 117.

the case with the armies of Oriental rulers, had resorted to forced levies from the overtaxed inhabitants of the country. Munro wrote:

> This last year a mutinous army was turned loose during the sowing season to collect their pay from the villagers. They drove off and sold the cattle, extorted money by torture from every man who fell into their hands, and plundered the houses and shops of those who fled, by which means the usual cultivation has been greatly diminished.*

The first thing to be done was to reduce the poligárs, and, owing to the energetic measures taken by Munro and General Campbell, within a year from the transfer of the country considerable progress was made in effecting this object. Many of the most powerful and turbulent among the poligárs were expelled from the Ceded Districts, and those who remained were forced to disband their armed retainers and to abstain from unauthorized exactions from the ryots. The removal of the Nizam's troops had, of course, followed immediately on the cession.

As in Canara, so in the Ceded Districts, the suppression of disorder was accompanied by a settlement of the land revenue. But the state of things to be dealt with in the two provinces was very different. That which was so marked a feature in Canara—private property in land—had no existence in Ballári or Cuddapah. In the latter districts the land had always been regarded as the property of the State. There were no traces of its having ever been the property of the cultivators or of the renters. The Inám † sunnuds ‡ granted by the Vijayanagar princes, as well as by rulers of more ancient date, invariably

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 343. † Minutes, vol. i. p. 22, footnote.
‡ Ibid., p. 62, footnote.

granted the soil as well as the assessment, thus proving that the land was considered to belong to the sovereign. Accurate records of ancient assessments, such as Munro had discovered in Canara, had no existence in the Ceded Districts. The little that was known of the revenue of these districts under the Vijayanagar Government, did not amount to more than a tradition that it used to be assessed in kind in the proportion of half the produce—a much higher rate than that demanded in Canara—and that this half was converted into money at a price unfavourable to the cultivator. Of the state of things under the rulers who succeeded the Vijayanagar kings, the accounts were extremely fragmentary, until the occupation of the country by Hyder Ali, from which time the records appear to have been tolerably complete.

With the information thus available Munro proceeded to institute a survey and assessment of the country under his charge. In the performance of this duty he was aided by four English assistants, members of the Civil Service, to each of whom, partially following the example of Read in the Baramahal, he assigned a separate charge, retaining under his own immediate management the southern portion of the Ballári district. The system of revenue which was introduced was ryotwár, differing from the system followed in Canara in that the assessment was fixed upon each separate field instead of including the entire holding, and that it was based upon a detailed measurement of the land and classification of the productive capacities of the various soils. The two processes of survey and assessment, which were conducted separately, were carried out very much upon the same principles as those which

have regulated the surveys and assessments made in India in more modern times, although they were probably less accurate, owing to the inferior character of the native agency which in those days was available. The survey was commenced in 1802 and finished in 1805. The classification of the land began in 1804, and was completed in 1806. Pending the completion of these operations, a rough settlement of the revenue was made through the potails, or heads of villages. The survey and assessment, imperfect as they may have been, were the most complete that had yet been made in any Indian province. They established once for all Munro's reputation as a revenue administrator, and served as a model, to be improved upon in future years, for the subsequent revenue settlements of Southern India.

This duty, performed as it was in the midst of others of a multifarious character, was extremely harassing. Munro wrote to Read:

> It is needless to tell you how I pass my time; for you know well enough what kind of life that of an itinerant Collector is. I have all the drudgery without any of the interesting investigations which employed so much of your time in the Baramahal. The detail of my own division, near ten lakhs of star pagodas, and the superintendence of others, leave me no leisure for speculations. The more common business of amildárs' letters, complaints, etc., often occupy the whole of the day. Besides, I am taken up an hour or two almost every other day in examining spies, and sending out parties of peons in quest of thieves and refugee poligárs. I am also obliged to furnish grain for three regiments of cavalry and the gun bullocks, and to transmit a diary every month to the Board to show that I am not idle. My annual circuit is near a thousand miles, and the hours I spend on horseback are almost the only time I can call my own.*

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 354.

Two years later, he wrote to the same correspondent:

Many causes have concurred to keep me at a distance from society, and to force me to travel about my districts alone, when I have more business of different kinds than I can well manage. The subordinate Collectors having been all removed, and a complete new set given to me last year, has been a great hindrance to my operations; for it has obliged me not only to continue to retain the greatest part of the country in my own hands, but to look after, for a time, the internal management of the other divisions. I am also a kind of commissary or agent for the army, for almost all their supplies are drawn from this province. I should have thought nothing of it, had it been only to equip them at first starting, but the demand is increasing. Ever since November, 1802, when the preparations for war began, I have never had less than ten thousand, and sometimes above thirty thousand bullocks in motion; and though peace has now been concluded, I am at this moment sending off ten thousand Warda bullocks with rice for General Wellesley's army beyond Árangabad. I have not only had the purchase of the supplies, but the payment of most of the bullocks. This bullock business, together with sheep, boats, pay of boatmen, and I do not know what, and the endless disputes and correspondence about accounts, bills, etc., leave me very little time for revenue. For more than three years I have not had a single holiday, and have very rarely risen from business before sunset. I could not have believed, had I not made the experiment, that it was possible to undergo such a constant drudgery; but, after all, my time is in some respects very unprofitably employed. You did infinitely more in one month in investigating the condition of the inhabitants and the principles of revenue, than I do in twelve. Two very bad seasons in this country, and all over the Deccan, have greatly augmented the usual difficulty of finding subsistence for the armies. In some parts of the Deccan there is a famine, and the scarcity here very nearly approaches to that calamity. The revenue of course has suffered greatly, and now stands at about fourteen lakhs of pagodas, instead

of sixteen, to which it would have risen this year, had the two last been ordinary seasons.*

The seven years which Munro spent in the Ceded Districts were probably the most important period in his official life. In the Baramahal his position had been a subordinate one. In Canara, where for the first time he was invested with an independent charge, his tenure of office had been too short to admit of his doing more than to suppress disorder, and to lay down principles of revenue administration which his successors could work out. In the Ceded Districts he remained long enough to guide and direct the development of the system which he introduced, and by constant intercourse with the people to habituate them to the spectacle of a ruler, who with inflexible firmness in securing the just rights of the State, and maintaining order and obedience to the law, combined a patient and benevolent attention to the well-being of all classes. The natives of India are not destitute of gratitude, nor are they deficient in the capacity to discern and appreciate the qualities which characterize a just, firm, and beneficent ruler. Towards Munro the ryots of Ballári and Cuddapah were led to entertain feelings of confidence and attachment which but few officials have been able to inspire, and when he left the province, his departure was lamented by all classes of the population. Nor was the memory of his good work one of those transient recollections which often pass away so speedily. The appellation by which Munro was most commonly known to the people of the Ceded Districts, was that of the

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 390, 391.

"Colonel Dora,"* with reference to the military rank which he held during the greater part of his service as Principal Collector; and to this day it is considered a sufficient answer to inquiries regarding the reason for any revenue rule, that it was laid down by the Colonel Dora.

But while Munro was thus winning the confidence and confirming the loyalty of the people committed to his charge, and at the same time consolidating the system of revenue with which his name has ever since been identified, the influences which had compelled him, though not without a vigorous protest, to submit a plan for the introduction of middle men between the State and the landlords of Canara, were still actively at work, and naturally were even more antagonistic to the adoption of a system of direct revenue settlements in a country in which there was no private property in land, and where the holdings on the average were even smaller and more numerous in proportion than in Canara. Nor was this antagonism confined to the authorities in Bengal. It was shared by eminent civil servants in the Madras Presidency, some of whom either were, or shortly afterwards became, members of the Board of Revenue, and brought all the weight of their official authority to bear upon the decision of the question. Thus, during the latter years of Munro's residence in the Ceded Districts, much of his time was occupied in discussions of the relative merits of the ryotwár and zemindári systems. From the Governor of Madras, Lord William Bentinck, who

* *Dora* means "gentleman." It is equivalent to the English "Mr." It is synonymous with the Hindustáni word "Sahib."

at an early period became convinced of the correctness of Munro's views, he received active and consistent support, and it was not until after Lord William Bentinck had left India, and Munro had retired from his post in the Ceded Districts, that the changes long threatened were carried into effect. But from Sir George Barlow, a Bengal civilian who succeeded Lord William Bentinck as Governor, and who, first as Secretary under Lord Cornwallis, and afterwards as a member of Lord Wellesley's Council, had been an active supporter of the zemindári settlement of Bengal, the ryotwár system encountered a determined opposition —an opposition which, as we have said, was not destitute of local support. The result was that shortly after Munro left India, the ryotwár method of settlement, which in the Baramahal had been already replaced by the múttadári * system, was in the Ceded Districts superseded by a system of triennial leases, under which the revenue of an entire village was farmed to the potail or principal ryot, or, in the event of his refusing to accept the lease, to a stranger. These triennial leases were followed by leases for ten years, both being regarded as preliminary to the adoption of a permanent settlement; but under both there were heavy losses of revenue to the State and much damage to the prosperity of the country, and after eight years' trial of the plan of leases to middle men, a recurrence to the ryotwár system was ordered by the Court of Directors.

* *Múttadári*—properly *muthádári*, from *muthá*—an estate composed of one or more villages. The word is nearly synonymous with *zemindári*, but it is usually applied to smaller estates than those held by the zemindárs in the Madras Presidency.

It would be foreign to the scope of this memoir to enter into an elaborate disquisitiön on the arguments adduced by the respective advocates of the two principles of revenue administration; but a few words on the salient points of the controversy, which was hotly maintained for many years, and which even now has not entirely died out, will not be out of place. The question at issue was not so much the question of permanent *versus* temporary settlements, as whether the State should receive its revenues direct from a large body of small landholders—for the most part the actual cultivators of the soil—or from a more limited body of middle men, who, either as zemindárs, or as múttadárs, or as renters of villages, should collect the revenues from the ryots, receiving a percentage for their trouble and responsibility. Allusion has already been made to Munro's views on the question of fixity of assessment. It may be said that he was entirely in favour of an assessment so far fixed that its terms were not to be liable to frequent or arbitrary variations, but at the same time were not to preclude the State, in times of exceptional financial pressure, from levying a special assessment to meet a special emergency. This was, of course, an important qualification, and it may fairly be argued that it deprived the settlement of that element of certainty which is essential to encourage agricultural improvement; but it is clear from Munro's writings that though, looking to our position in India at that time and to the additional demands upon the treasury which the military expenditure was certain to involve, he considered it prudent to attach this qualification to the terms of our revenue settlements, he was

prepared to abandon it, provided that the State did not sacrifice the prospective increase of revenue that might be derived from the many millions of acres still remaining uncultivated, but which in Bengal, under the settlement made by Lord Cornwallis, had been surrendered in perpetuity to the zemindárs. What Munro mainly objected to was the creation of middle men extemporized for the purpose. His contention was, that where large landholders did not already exist, it was not wise, either from an economic or from a political point of view, to create them by an artificial process. As we have already said, one of his guiding principles was to accept existing institutions as he found them, and to reform and strengthen, but not to improve them off the face of the earth. Thus, when some years later he had, as Governor of Madras, to deal with the zemindáries of the Northern Sirkars and of North Arcot, some of which were of very ancient date, he did not scruple to propose a law of entail with the avowed object of giving security and permanency to that description of tenure. But what he contended for in regard to the Ceded Districts, and in regard to the greater part of Southern and Western India, was that the ancient land tenure of the country was not zemindári or múttadári, or any other tenure implying the existence of a middle man between the cultivator and the ruling power, but pure and simple ryotwár. Nor did he admit that a system involving the direct collection of the revenues of the State from a large body of small landholders, was of necessity unworkable or even inconvenient.

His views on this point are well expressed in the following extract from a letter addressed to the

Board of Revenue shortly before his departure from the Ceded Districts :—

The chief arguments against the ryotwár system, are the great detail of accounts, and the consequent difficulty of management; the interference of revenue officers in cultivation; the expense of collection; and the fluctuation in the annual amount of the public revenue. But there seems to be nothing very serious in these objections. When a country is surveyed and the rent of every field fixed, the accounts become perfectly simple—they are nothing more than a list of ryots and fields; and if the ryots do not next year take up new or throw up old land, the same register will serve again; and as curnums must always be kept, there is no more difficulty in getting from them the accounts of a hundred ryots, than of one múttadár. The accounts of the customs, which yield so small a portion of revenue, are infinitely more intricate and troublesome than those of the land-rent. If such a remission is granted as will leave the ryots a private rent, after discharging the public one, the interference of revenue servants will be unnecessary. Their own interest will stimulate them to cultivate, as in Canara, where no revenue officer ever thinks of calling upon the owner to plough or sow his fields. The additional expense of collection in the ryotwár settlement would be gradually compensated by the rent of waste lands brought into cultivation, and the fluctuation in the annual amount of the revenue would be gradually lessened, as the ryots became attached to their farms, by the benefits of a low assessment, and retaining them as a lasting possession, instead of changing them, partly or wholly, almost every year.*

Munro, as we have said, held strongly the opinion that the ryotwár system was the ancient system of India, and he argued that any system which might be introduced would have a tendency, in the absence of artificial restraints, to resolve itself into ryotwár, 'because the duration of great property 'in any family was opposed by early and universal 'marriage, and by equal division among all the

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 96.

'sons.' * If, in despite of this tendency, some of the larger landholders, created under the new arrangements, should develop into armed chiefs, like some of the larger zemindárs, the result in his opinion would be 'detrimental to the country and dan-'gerous to the Government.' †

Writing on this subject some years later, Munro observed:

Most of the well-intentioned, but visionary, plans for the improvement of India by the creation of zemindárs of whole districts, or of simple villages, appear to have originated in extreme ignorance of the state of the landed property of the country and the rights of the persons by whom it was held. It has been supposed by some that the zemindárs were the landlords or proprietors, and the ryots their under-tenants or labourers, and by others that the sovereign was the sole landlord, and the ryots were cultivating tenants. But the ryot is the real proprietor, for whatever land does not belong to the sovereign, belongs to him. The demand for public revenue, according as it be high or low in different places and at different times, affects his share; but whether it leaves him only the bare profit of his stock, or a small surplus beyond it as landlord's rent, he is still the true proprietor, and possesses all that is not claimed by the sovereign as revenue. . . . The distribution of landed property differs in every country: it is different in Ireland from what it is in England, and in India from what it is in other countries. But we ought to take it as we find it, and not attempt, upon idle notions of improvement, to force a distribution of it into larger properties, when every local circumstance is adverse to its continuance in that state. The experiment has already been tried by the establishing of village zemindárs or múttadárs, and has already very generally failed. The event could not possibly have been otherwise, of a measure whose object was to bring a new class of proprietors into villages where the produce was too little for the old ones. Even in those villages which are still in the hands of múttadárs, the object of having larger landed properties will entirely fail, because the properties, by

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 95. † Ibid., p. 94.

sale and division among heirs, are fast subdividing, and will soon dwindle into portions smaller than the properties of individual ryots. There are instances in which this has already happened, and they will soon become so numerous, that the system must at no distant period die a natural death.*

It must not, however, be supposed that in affirming the ryotwár to have been the ancient system of India, Munro overlooked the fact that it had been preceded by a system of common or joint tenures by village communities. The latter system had to a great extent died out in the Madras Presidency, and had been superseded by a system of separate holdings. When the change took place, was not exactly known. Munro believed that in many places it dated back to a very remote period. He observed:

Such a change is the natural course of things, and must always precede every material improvement, and is only restrained from becoming general by over assessment or by difficulties regarding water. If one part of the lands of a village has advantages over the other in these respects, the common tenure will be acceptable to the proprietors by giving to all in their turn the benefit of the favoured land; but where the advantages of the several lots of land are nearly equal, the occupants will in general wish to keep their own permanently, because no man ever labours with the same spirit to improve what he is to share with another, as what he is to retain exclusively for himself. The common tenure has existed in many nations, but usually in the rude and early stages of agriculture, and has always, I believe, been considered as hostile to improvement.

But even if the joint tenure system had been more prevalent in South India than it was, this fact would not have affected Munro's argument against the creation of a quasi-landlord class to act as middle men between the ryots and the State.

* Minutes, vol. i. pp. 253, 254.

Though for the reasons above given Munro preferred separate tenures to joint tenures, there can be little doubt that, had the latter system remained in full force, he would have been as much opposed to supplementing it by an arbitrary creation of middle men, as he was to supplementing the system of separate tenures by a similar device.

The views of Munro's opponents, like those of Lord Cornwallis and his Council, were entirely derived from English precedents. To them it appeared to be contrary to all sound principles that the State should deal direct with a numerous body of small landholders. They contended that, as a matter of fact, an intermediate agency—including under that term the native collectors of revenue, such as tahsildárs, amildárs, etc.—had always existed between the Government and the ryots; and they argued that the creation of a body of large landowners, where it did not already exist, would be followed by a better system of agriculture, by the protection of the ryots from oppression, and by establishing 'that just gradation of rank which is so essential 'to the existence and prosperity of every well-ordered 'society.' *

Upwards of three-quarters of a century have elapsed since the commencement of this controversy. During that period the two rival systems have had an ample trial, and it cannot be said that the result has been adverse to Munro's views. The latest public utterance on the subject is contained in the Report of the Indian Famine Commissioners, who contrast the position of the Madras and Bombay ryots

* Paper by Mr. J. Hodgson, printed as an Appendix to the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons on the Affairs of the East India Company, 1812.

as 'independent landholders,' possessing a 'tenure 'as secure and simple as can well be conceived,' with that of the 'tenant of the north, often holding his 'land at a rack rent and with no permanent interest 'in the land,' and who state that they 'have received 'a large amount of evidence, remarkable in its weight 'and unanimity, to the effect that in the Bengal 'province the relations of landlord and tenant are 'in a specially unsatisfactory condition.' *

After Munro had been about two years in the Ceded Districts, the second war with the Mahrattas took place. The alliance which had subsisted between the Mahrattas and the Company in 1792, when a Mahratta force co-operated with the British army in the war against Tippoo, had been succeeded by sentiments of distrust and hostility on the part of the Mahrattas. In the last war against Tippoo they had failed to send the contingent which they were bound to furnish by the Treaty of Seringapatam; and, in fact, the Peshwa and Sindia had planned an attack upon the Nizam, the ally of the British, while his army was engaged at the siege of Seringapatam. At the close of the Mysore war the Peshwa had declined to accept a share of the conquered territory offered to him by the Governor-General subject to the condition that he, like the Nizam, should accept a British subsidiary force. Although the nominal head of the Mahratta confederacy, the Peshwa had been for some time little more than a puppet in the hands of Sindia; but war having broken out between Jeswant Ráo Holkar and Sindia, which resulted in an attack on Poona and the

* Report of the Indian Famine Commission, Part II., dated 31st July, 1880 pp 111 and 117.

defeat by Holkar of the combined armies of Sindia and the Peshwa, the latter had escaped to Bassein, near Bombay, and there, on the 2nd of December, 1802, had made with the British a separate treaty 'of defensive alliance and reciprocal protection,' under which he agreed to receive a subsidiary force, assigning certain districts for their support.

The Treaty of Bassein gave great offence to the other Mahratta chiefs, who saw plainly enough that the system of subsidiary alliances with the British was fatal to the independence of native States; and a confederation was speedily formed between Sindia and the Rájá of Berár to oppose the English—a confederation to which the Peshwa, notwithstanding the treaty, was secretly a party. The immediate *casus belli* was the position taken up by the troops of Sindia and the Berár Rájá on the confines of the Nizam's territories. The Governor-General resolved to attack the Mahrattas in Hindustan, Guzerat, and Cuttack, as well as in the Deccan, and for this purpose four *corps d'armée* were formed, numbering altogether about 55,000 men. The two most important of these bodies were placed under the respective commands of General Lake, the Commander-in-Chief in Bengal, and of General Arthur Wellesley, who still held the military, as well as the civil command in Mysore. The latter speedily captured Ahmednagar, a strong and important fortress, and on the 3rd of September, 1803, defeated the united forces of Sindia and Berár at Assye, after one of the severest engagements that had yet been fought in India. The capture of Burhanpur and of Asírghar, another fortress of considerable strength and the last of Sindia's possessions in the Deccan,

speedily followed, and the defeat of the Berár troops at Argáon on the 28th of November finished the war in that part of India. On the 1st of the same month the battle of Laswári, in which General Lake completely defeated Sindia's northern army, ended the war in the north. The result of these operations was a considerable addition to the Company's territories, including the greater part of the districts which now form the North-Western Provinces, and the Delhi territory, as well as Cuttack and a part of Guzerat.

Munro, as may be supposed, was a keenly interested observer of the events of the war. Indeed, before it commenced, and before the Treaty of Bassein was executed, on hearing of Holkar's victory at Poona, he addressed a letter to the Governor-General, urging that the opportunity should be taken for imposing a subsidiary alliance upon the Peshwa, and obtaining from him in return a portion of the Southern Mahratta country. The latter object, to which Munro, from the time of the conquest of Mysore, had attached very great importance, regarding the possession of the districts in question as essential to secure our territories against incursions from the Mahrattas, was not accomplished until 1818, when Munro, in command of a division of the Madras army, had the satisfaction of effecting it.

During this war, as during the operations against Dhundaji a few years before, Munro maintained a constant correspondence with General Wellesley, whose army depended for its supplies mainly on the districts under Munro's charge. This correspondence includes an interesting letter from General Wellesley, explaining his tactics at Assye, and commencing with

the remark that as Munro was 'a judge of military 'operations,' he was 'anxious to have his opinion on 'his side.' Munro's reply is characteristic—modest, cordial, and friendly, but frank in its criticism, and affording evidence of considerable strategic ability on the part of the writer.*

* These letters are so interesting that we subjoin copies of them in full.

From General Wellesley to Major Munro.

'Camp at Cherikain,
'November 1st, 1803.

'MY DEAR MUNRO,

'As you are a judge of a 'military operation, and as I am de- 'sirous of having your opinion on my 'side, I am about to give you an ac- 'count of the battle of Assye in 'answer to your letter of the 19th 'October; in which I think I shall 'solve all the doubts which must 'naturally occur to any man who looks 'at that transaction without a suffi- 'cient knowledge of the facts. Before 'you will receive this, you will most 'probably have seen my public letter 'to the Governor-General regarding 'the action, a copy of which was sent 'to General Campbell. That letter 'will give you a general outline of the 'facts. Your principal objection to 'the action is that I detached Colonel 'Stevenson. The fact is, I did not 'detach Colonel Stevenson. His was 'a separate corps equally strong, if 'not stronger than mine. We were 'desirous to engage the enemy at the 'same time, and settled a plan ac- 'cordingly for an attack on the morn- 'ing of the 24th. We separated on 'the 22nd: he to march by the 'western, I by the eastern road round 'the hills between Budnapoor and 'Jaulna; and I have to observe that 'this separation was necessary—first, 'because both corps could not pass 'through the same defiles in one day; 'secondly, because it was to be appre- 'hended that if we left open one of 'the roads through those hills, the 'enemy might have passed to the 'southward while we were going to 'the northward, and then the action 'would have been delayed, or probably 'avoided altogether. Colonel Steven- 'son and I were never more than 'twelve miles distant from each other, 'and when I moved forward to the 'action of the 23rd, we were not much 'more than eight miles. As usual, we 'depended for our intelligence of the 'enemy's position on the common hir- 'carrahs of the country. Their horse 'are so numerous, that without an 'army their position could not be re- 'connoitred by an European officer; 'and even the hircarrahs in our own 'service, who are accustomed to ex- 'amine and report on positions, cannot 'be employed here, as, being natives 'of the Carnatic, they are as well 'known as an European.

'The hircarrahs reported the enemy 'to be at Bokerdun. Their right was 'at Bokerdun, which was the principal 'place in their position, and gave the 'name to the district in which they 'were encamped; but their left, in 'which was their infantry, which I 'was to attack, was at Assye, which 'was six or eight miles from Boker- 'dun.

'I directed my march so as to be 'within twelve or fourteen miles of 'their army at Bokerdun, as I thought, 'on the 23rd. But when I arrived at 'the ground of encampment, I found 'that I was not more than five or six 'miles from it. I was then informed 'that the cavalry had marched, and 'the infantry were about to follow, 'but were still on the ground. At all 'events, it was necessary to ascertain

Another event which occurred while Munro was in the Ceded Districts, was the mutiny of the native

'these points, and I could not venture 'to reconnoitre without my whole 'force. But I believed the report to 'be true, and I determined to attack 'the infantry if it remained still upon 'the ground. I apprised Colonel 'Stevenson of this determination, and 'desired him to move forward. Before 'marching on I found, not only their 'infantry, but their cavalry encamped 'in a most formidable position, which, 'by-the-by, it would have been im'possible for me to attack, if, when 'the infantry changed their front, they 'had taken care to occupy the only 'passage there was across the Kaitna.

'When I found their whole army and 'contemplated their position, of course 'I considered whether I should attack 'immediately, or should delay till the 'following morning. I determined 'upon the immediate attack, because 'I saw clearly that if I attempted to 'return to my camp at Naulniah, I 'should have been followed thither by 'the whole of the enemy's cavalry, 'and I might have suffered some loss: 'instead of attacking, I might have 'been attacked there in the morning; 'and at all events I should have found 'it very difficult to secure my baggage 'as I did, in any place so near the 'enemy's camp, in which they should 'know it was; I therefore determined 'upon the attack immediately.

'It was certainly a most desperate 'one, but our guns were not silenced. 'Our bullocks, and the people who 'were employed to draw them, were 'shot, and they could not all be drawn 'on; but some were, and all con'tinued to fire as long as the fire 'could be of any use.

'Desperate as the action was, our 'loss would not have exceeded one'half of its present amount, if it had 'not been for a mistake in the officer 'who led the picquets which were on 'the right of the first line.

When the enemy cnanged their 'position, they threw their left to 'Assye, in which village they had 'some infantry; and it was sur'rounded by cannon. As soon as I 'saw that, I directed the officer com'manding the picquets to keep out of 'shot from that village; instead of 'that, he led directly upon it; the '74th, which were on the right of 'the first line, followed the picquets, 'and the great loss we sustained was 'in these two bodies. Another evil 'which resulted from this mistake 'was the necessity of introducing the 'cavalry into the cannonade and the 'action, long before it was time, by 'which that corps lost many men 'and its unity and efficiency, which 'I intended to bring forward in a 'close pursuit at the heel of the day. 'But it was necessary to bring for'ward the cavalry to save the re'mains of the 74th and the picquets 'which would otherwise have been 'entirely destroyed. Another evil re'sulting from it was, that we had 'then no reserve left, and a parcel of 'straggling horse cut up our wounded; 'and straggling infantry, who had 'pretended to be dead, turned their 'guns upon our backs.

'After all, notwithstanding the 'attack upon Assye by our right and 'the cavalry, no impression was made 'upon the corps collected there, till I 'made a movement upon it with some 'troops taken from our left after the 'enemy's right had been defeated; 'and it would have been as well to 'have left it alone entirely till that 'movement was made. However, I 'do not wish to cast any reflection 'upon the officer who led the pic'quets. I lament the consequences 'of his mistake: but I must acknow'ledge that it was not possible for a 'man to lead a body into a hotter fire 'than he did the picquets on that day 'against Assye.

'After the action there was no

troops at Vellore. Munro had observed, not without anxiety, the large proportion which, owing to succes-

'pursuit, because our cavalry was not 'then in a state to pursue. It was 'near dark when the action was over; 'and we passed the night on the field 'of battle.

'Colonel Stevenson marched with 'part of his corps as soon as he heard 'that I was about to move forward, 'and he also moved upon Bokerdun. 'He did not receive my letter till 'evening. He got entangled in a 'nullah in the night, and arrived at 'Bokerdun, about eight miles from 'me to the westward, at eight in the 'morning of the 24th.

'The enemy passed the night of 'the 23rd at about twelve miles from 'the field of battle, twelve from the 'Adjuntee Ghaut, and eight from 'Bokerdun. As soon as they heard 'that Colonel Stevenson was advanc-'ing to the latter place, they set off, 'and never stopped till they had got 'down the Ghaut, where they arrived 'in the course of the night of the '24th. After his difficulties of the 'night of the 23rd, Colonel Stevenson 'was in no state to follow them, and 'did not do so till the 26th. The 'reason for which he was detained till 'that day was that I might have the 'benefit of the assistance of his sur-'geons to dress my wounded soldiers, 'many of whom, after all, were not 'dressed for nearly a week for want 'of the necessary number of medical 'men. I had also a long and difficult 'negociation with the Nizam's sirdars 'to induce them to admit my wounded 'into any of the Nizam's forts; and I 'could not allow them to depart until 'I had settled that point. Besides, I 'knew that the enemy had passed the 'Ghaut, and that to pursue them a 'day sooner or a day later would 'make no difference. Since the battle 'Stevenson has taken Burhampoor 'and Asseerghur. I have defended the 'Nizam's territories. They first 'threatened them through the Casser-'barry Ghaut, and I moved to the 'southward to the neighbourhood of 'Arungabad. I then saw clearly that 'they intended to attempt the siege 'of Asseerghur, and I moved up to the 'northward and descended the Ad-'juntee Ghaût and stopped Scindiah. 'Stevenson took Asseerghur on the '21st. I heard the intelligence on 'the 24th, and that the Rajah of 'Berar had come to the south with 'an army. I ascended the Ghaut on 'the 25th, and have marched a hun-'dred and twenty miles since in eight 'days, by which I have saved all our 'convoys and the Nizam's territories. 'I have been near the Rajah of Berar 'two days, in the course of which he 'has marched five times; and I sus-'pect that he is now off to his own 'country, finding that he can do no-'thing in this. If that is the case, I 'shall soon begin an offensive opera-'tion there.

'But these exertions, I fear, cannot 'last, and yet, if they are relaxed, such 'is the total absence of all government 'and means of defence in this country, 'that it must fall. It makes me sick 'to have anything to do with them; 'and it is impossible to describe 'their state. Pray exert yourself for 'Bistnapah Pundit, and believe me,

'Ever yours most sincerely,

'Arthur Wellesley.'

From Major Munro to General Wellesley.

'Khâdirabad,

'28th November, 1803.

'Dear General,

'I have received your letter 'of the 1st instant, and have read 'with great pleasure and interest your 'clear and satisfactory account of the 'battle of Assye. You say you wish 'to have my opinion on your side; if it 'can be of any use to you, you have it 'on your side, not only in that battle,

sive augmentations of the native army, the native troops bore to the European force. In a letter to

'but in the conduct of the campaign. 'The merit of this last is exclusively 'your own; the success of every 'battle must always be shared, in 'some degree, by the most skilful 'general with his troops. I must 'own I have always been averse to 'the practice of carrying on war with 'too many scattered armies, and also 'of fighting battles by the combined 'attacks of separate divisions. When 'several armies invade a country on 'separate sides, unless each of them 'is separately a match for the enemy's 'whole army, there is always a danger 'of their being defeated one after 'another, because, having a shorter 'distance to march, he may draw his 'force together and march upon a 'particular army before it can be 'supported. When a great army is 'encamped in separate divisions, it 'must of course be attacked in 'separate columns. But Indian armies 'are usually crowded together on a 'spot, and will, I imagine, be more 'easily routed by a single attack than 'by two or three separate attacks by 'the same force. I see perfectly the 'necessity of your advancing by one 'route, and Colonel Stevenson by 'another, in order to get clear of the 'defiles in one day. I know also that 'you could not have reconnoitred the 'enemy's position without carrying 'on your whole army; but I have 'still some doubts whether the im'mediate attack was, under all circum'stances, the best measure you could 'have adopted. Your objections to 'delay are, that the enemy might 'have gone off and frustrated your 'design of bringing them to battle, or 'that you might have lost the ad'vantage of attack by their attacking 'you in the morning. The consider'ations which would have made me 'hesitate, are that you could hardly 'expect to defeat the enemy with less 'than half the loss you actually 'suffered; that after breaking their 'infantry, your cavalry, even when 'entire, was not sufficiently strong to 'pursue any distance, without which 'you could not have done so much 'execution among them as to counter'balance your own loss; and, lastly, 'that there was a possibility of your 'being repulsed, in which case the 'great superiority of the enemy's 'cavalry, with some degree of spirit 'which they would have derived from 'success, might have rendered a 'retreat impracticable. Suppose that 'you had not advanced to the attack, 'but remained under arms, after 'reconnoitring at long-shot distance, 'I am convinced that the enemy 'would have decamped in the night, 'and as you could have instantly 'followed them, they would have 'been obliged to leave all or most of 'their guns behind. If they ventured 'to keep their position, which seems 'to me incredible, the result would 'still have been equally favourable: 'you might have attacked them in the 'course of the night; their artillery 'would have been of little use in the 'dark; it would have fallen into your 'hands, and their loss of men would 'very likely have been greater than 'yours. If they determined to attack 'you in the morning, as far as I can 'judge from the different reports that 'I have heard of the ground, I think 'it would have been the most desirable 'event that could have happened, for 'you would have had it in your power 'to attack them either in the opera'tion of passing the river, or after the 'whole had passed, but before they 'were completely formed. They must, 'however, have known that Stevenson 'was approaching, and that he might 'possibly join you in the morning, 'and this assistance alone would, I 'have no doubt, have induced them to 'retreat in the night. Your mode of 'attack, though it might not have

General Wellesley written two years before the Vellore mutiny took place, he gave expression to his apprehensions on this subject in the following terms :—

The Indian armies in the different augmentations that have been made since the fall of Seringapatam, have received no proportionable increase of Europeans, and the European force is in consequence much below the proportion which it ought always to hold to the native battalions. Though we have but little reason to apprehend any danger from our native troops, yet it is not impossible that circumstances may induce them to listen to the instigations of enterprising leaders, and support them in mutiny and revolt. After seeing what has happened among our own soldiers and sailors in England, we cannot suppose that it is impossible to shake the fidelity of our sepoys. The best security against such an event would be an increase to our European force, which ought to be, I think, to our native in proportion of one to four, or at least one to five.

The facts of the Vellore mutiny are well known, at all events to most Anglo-Indian readers. Vellore was the fortress in which the members of Tippoo's family were placed after his death and the capture

'been the safest, was undoubtedly the 'most decided and heroic. It will 'have the effect of striking greater 'terror into the hostile armies than 'could have been done by any victory 'gained with the assistance of Colonel 'Stevenson's division, and of raising 'the national character, already high 'in India, still higher.

'I hear that negotiations are going 'on at a great rate. Sindia may 'possibly be secure, but it is more 'likely that one view at least in 'opening them is to encourage his 'army, and to deter his tributaries 'from insurrection. After fighting so 'hard, you are entitled to dictate your 'own terms of peace.

'You seem to be out of humour 'with the country in which you are, 'from its not being defensible. The 'difficulty of defence must, I imagine, 'proceed either from want of posts, or 'from the scarcity of all kind of 'supplies. The latter is most likely 'the case, and it can only be remedied 'by your changing the scene of action. 'The Nizam ought to be able to defend 'his own country, and if you could 'contrive to make him exert himself 'a little, you would be at liberty to 'carry the war into the Berár Rájá's 'country, which, from the long enjoy-'ment of peace, ought to be able to 'furnish provisions. He would pro-'bably make a separate peace, and 'you might thus draw from his 'country supplies for carrying on the 'war with Sindia.

'Believe me, dear General,
'Yours truly,
'Thomas Munro.'

of Seringapatam. The garrison at that time consisted of four companies of His Majesty's 69th Regiment, one complete regiment of Native Infantry, and six companies of a second. Early in the morning of the 10th of July, 1806, the sepoys rose upon their European officers and upon the British part of the garrison, and killed thirteen officers and a considerable number of men. Intelligence of the outbreak having been conveyed to Arcot, nine miles distant, Lieutenant-Colonel Gillespie,* then in command of the 19th Dragoons, galloping over to Vellore with a squadron of his regiment, a troop of Native Cavalry, and two galloper guns, rescued the survivors, who had established themselves in the ramparts partially under cover, where they were able to keep their assailants at bay. The fort was speedily in the possession of the British troops, and three or four hundred sepoys were cut down or bayoneted, and a still larger number made prisoners.

There was considerable difference of opinion as to the cause of the outbreak. Many persons, and among them the Governor of Madras, attributed it to a wide-spread plot to massacre the English and to restore Mussulman rule in Mysore, if not also in the Carnatic and other parts of the Presidency—a plot to which it was supposed that some of the poligárs in the Ceded Districts were privy. Others ascribed it to certain regulations recently issued, prohibiting the sepoys from wearing caste marks when in uniform and from wearing beards, and prescribing a

* Colonel Gillespie, a most gallant officer, caused himself on this occasion to be hoisted by a rope by the men of the 69th on to the ramparts. He subsequently distinguished himself greatly in the war in Java in 1811. Three years later, in the war with Nepál, he was killed when storming the fortified position of Kalunga.

CHAPTER V.

Munro's return to England—Eulogium passed by the Madras Government—Lord W. Bentinck's letter—Testimonial from Assistants in Ceded Districts and Canara—Appellation bestowed upon him by the natives—Sentiments on leaving India—Death of his mother—Decaying faculties of his father—Charter discussions—Attacks on the East India Company—Lord Grenville's speech—The trade question of the outports—Previous removal of restrictions by Lord Wellesley—Other questions discussed—Munro's views on the trade question—Remarks on the habits of the Hindus—His views on military questions—On the judicial system and police—Appointment on special commission to Madras.

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL MUNRO (he had attained that rank in 1804) resigned his appointment in the Ceded Districts in October, 1807, preparatory to returning to England on furlough. He had held his office for seven years—a long time for the tenure of an office in India, where, owing to the climate and the consequent failure of health, changes in the *personnel* of the English officials are so frequent. He had gained the approbation of his official superiors, the esteem and regard of his subordinates, and the confidence and veneration of the people. In announcing to the Court of Directors Munro's relinquishment of the office of Principal Collector, the Madras Government expressed their hope that the exertions which had been 'made by Lieutenant-'Colonel Munro in the advancement of the public 'service under circumstances of extreme difficulty,

'and with a degree of success unequalled in the 'records of this, or probably of any other Govern-'ment,' would 'receive a corresponding recompense 'in the approbation' of the Honourable Court. They observed that while gradually augmenting the annual revenues from twelve and a half lakhs to eighteen lakhs of star pagodas, Lieutenant-Colonel Munro had 'produced a general amelioration and improvement 'in the manners and habits' of the inhabitants of the Ceded Districts, under the influence of which, 'from disunited hordes of lawless plunderers and 'freebooters,' they had become 'as far advanced 'in civilization, submission to the laws, and obedience 'to the magistrates as any of the subjects' under the Madras Government. 'The revenues,' they wrote, 'are collected with facility, every one seems 'satisfied with his situation, and the regret of the 'people is universal on the departure of the Principal 'Collector.' *

The foregoing encomium was contained in an official despatch, based upon a Minute recorded by Mr. Petrie, who acted as Governor of Madras during the interregnum between the departure of Lord William Bentinck and the arrival of Sir George Barlow. Lord William Bentinck had left India a few weeks before Munro. He was, as we have said, a consistent supporter of Munro's ryotwár policy, and entertained a very high opinion of his services. In a letter which he addressed to Munro, not long before they both left India, he expressed himself in the following terms:—

I trust I need not take any pains to convince you of the sincere concern which I have felt at your intended departure.

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. pp. 340, 341.

I say to you now, what I shall recommend to be stated in the most public manner, that the thanks of this Government are, in an especial manner, due to you for the distinguished and important services which you have been performing for the East India Company for so many years. These have been no ordinary revenue duties: on the contrary, the most difficult work that can be assigned to man has been most successfully accomplished by you. You have restored the extensive provinces committed to your charge, long infested by every species of disorder and calamity, private and public, to a state of prosperity, and have made them a most valuable acquisition to your country. It is satisfactory to know that the most important part of the revenue arrangement, the survey, which could scarcely have been executed under any other superintendence, has been completed before your departure. This will make the road, in respect to the revenues, easy for your successors. But I fear that in provinces not long since so very much disturbed, a continuance of the same good policy will be indispensable. It is to your advice that I must refer for determining by what arrangement these districts shall be hereafter managed—whether by a Principal and Subordinate Collectors, or by two or three separate zillah Collectors. The zillahs are the cheapest and most convenient mode. Are the servants at present there equal to the charge? The present arrangement was always, according to my judgment, the most eligible. A Principal Collector partaking of the confidence of Government is more particularly necessary as your successor. It may be expected that the absence of your authority and arrangements must be attended with some injurious effects. These effects may grow into serious consequences if there is not immediately established an able and efficient superintendence. It had occurred to me that Mr. Thackeray might be inclined, and would be the most proper person, from various considerations, to succeed you, in case the same arrangement as now obtains should be continued. I am desirous in the first instance to receive your sentiments upon this subject. My great and anxious object is to preserve to the Ceded Districts, as far as possible, a continuance

of the same system, in all its parts and branches, by which such vast public benefits have been obtained.*

But it was not only by his official superiors that testimony was borne to Munro's merits as a public servant. Shortly after his return to England he received the following letter, signed by eight civil servants who had served under him in the Ceded Districts or in Canara:—

16th February, 1808.

Dear Sir,

We have all had the happiness of serving under you, either in the Ceded Districts or in Canara. We admire the generosity, the kindness, and the magnanimous equality of temper which for eight years we constantly experienced from you, amidst sickness, difficulties, and fatigue. As public servants we can bear witness to the justice, moderation, and wisdom with which you have managed the important provinces under your authority. We know that the Ceded Districts hold your name in veneration and feel the keenest regret at your departure. As for ourselves, we attribute our success in life, in a great measure, to you, and think if we are good public servants, we have chiefly learnt to be so from your instruction and example. We are at a loss how to express our feelings; but we request your acceptance of a cup which Mr. Cochrane, your former deputy in the Ceded Districts, will have the honour to present to you.†

And of the confidence with which Munro had inspired the natives of the districts committed to his charge, very remarkable evidence is furnished by the following anecdote, mentioned in Colonel Wilks' 'Sketches of the South of India':—

I will not deny myself the pleasure (says Colonel Wilks) of stating an incident related to me by a respectable public servant of the Government of Mysore, who was sent in 1807 to assist in the adjustment of a disputed boundary between

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. p. 344.

† Ibid., p. 343.

that territory and the district in charge of the Collector. A violent dispute occurred in his presence between some villagers, and the party aggrieved threatened to go to Anantipur and complain to their *father*. He perceived that Colonel Munro was meant, and found upon inquiry that he was generally distinguished throughout the district by that appellation.

Munro left India in October, 1807, and reached England in the April of the following year, after an absence of more than twenty-eight years. He had left England a lad of eighteen; he returned a middle-aged man of forty-six. He did not quit India without those misgivings which every man must feel after so prolonged an absence from his native country and from his family. Writing to his sister two years before his departure from the Ceded Districts, he remarked that correspondence between India and Scotland, between persons who had not seen each other for nearly thirty years, and who might never meet again, was like letters from the dead to the living.

We are both so changed from what we were, that when I think of home and take up one of your letters, I almost fancy myself listening to a being of another world. No moral or religious book, not even the Gospel itself, ever calls my attention so powerfully to the shortness of life, as does in some solitary hour the recollection of my friends and of the long course of days and years that have passed away since I saw them.*

As the time drew near for his departure, these sentiments became mingled with anxiety as to how he should employ his time in England. He wrote:

What I am chiefly anxious about is what I am to do when I get home. I have no rank in the army there, and could not be employed upon an expedition to the

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 403.

Continent or any other quarter; and as I am a stranger to the generous natives of your isle, I should be excluded from every other line as well as military, and should have nothing to do but to lie down in a field like the farmer's boy and look at the lark sailing through the clouds. I wish to see our father and mother, and shall therefore make the voyage, but I much fear that I shall soon get tired of an idle life and be obliged to return to this country for employment.*

The wish expressed in the latter part of the foregoing extract was not destined to be gratified as regards one of his parents; for his mother had already died before his letter was written, and by the time he reached Scotland, his father, who had watched his career with pride, and up to a short time previously with unflagging interest, had begun to fail in mind, as well as in body, and was but little capable of enjoying the pleasure which, under other circumstances, he would have derived from renewed intercourse with his son.

Munro remained in England upwards of six years. During the earlier part of this period he spent a good deal of his time in Scotland, principally in Edinburgh; but he subsequently removed to London, where he was much consulted on questions at that time engaging the attention of the Court of Directors and of the Government. When Munro returned from India in 1808, the charter, under which the East India Company were invested with the government of India and carried on their trade, had only five years to run, and preparations were already being made, on the one side by the Directors of the Company to defend, and on the other by their enemies to attack, the further continuance

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 418.

of the privileges, especially in respect of the trade, which had been continued to the Company by the Charter Act of 1793.

No serious opposition was offered to the continuance to the Company of their territorial powers, if we except a remarkable speech by Lord Grenville, who denounced the union of the functions of a sovereign with those of a trader, and declared that 'twenty years was too long a period for farming 'out the commerce of half the globe and the government of sixty millions of people,' and that the government of India ought to be vested in the Crown; the patronage difficulty being got rid of by the adoption of a system of open competition for the Civil Service, and by conferring the military cadetships, by some fixed plan, upon the sons of officers who had died in the discharge of their duties.* But these sentiments were nearly half a century in advance of the time at which they were uttered, and did not find supporters. As regards the continuance of the trade monopoly, the case was different. Here the claims advanced by the Company, who sought to maintain their privileges intact, encountered a strenuous opposition, and the result was, that while the monopoly of the trade with China was continued to the Company for a further period of twenty years, as well as liberty to pursue its trade with India, the latter trade was thrown open to the nation, though with the restriction that no private vessel employed in it should be of larger dimensions than four hundred tons.

The question upon which the most animated discussion took place, was that of extending the

* Wilson's 'Continuation of Mill's History of India,' vol. vii. pp. 563, et seq.

export and import trade with India to the provincial ports, or outports, as they were then called, of Great Britain. When the provisions of the new charter were first brought under consideration, the Government proposed to limit the extension of the trade to vessels sailing from and to the port of London; but as the discussion advanced, the merchants of Liverpool, Glasgow, and the other leading provincial ports brought so much pressure to bear upon the Government, that, notwithstanding the most urgent protests of the Court of Directors and of the Court of Proprietors of the East India Company, the proposed limitation was abandoned.

This question of throwing open the trade with India was one which could not have been postponed for many years; for the trade had grown beyond the capacity of a single company, whose servants were engaged in the arduous task of forming and consolidating an extensive empire, to make adequate provision for it. Fifteen years before, Lord Wellesley had found it necessary to give additional facilities to the merchants of Calcutta, by chartering a number of vessels built at that port, where shipbuilding was being extensively carried out, and reletting them to private merchants, with liberty to make their own arrangements with the proprietors. This measure, though highly disapproved of by the Court of Directors at the time, was necessary in order to secure to Great Britain the trade of India, then being rapidly diverted to foreign countries, to whose vessels the Indian ports were free. In 1797 the imports and exports of American, Portuguese, and Danish vessels had exceeded a million and a half sterling, and in September, 1800, there

were 8500 tons of foreign shipping, under foreign colours, lying in the Hooghly, while the India-built shipping anchored at the port amounted to 10,000 tons. Moreover, during the interval which elapsed before the renewal of the charter, two circumstances occurred which tended to hasten the removal of the restrictions on the Indian trade. One was the rapid advance of English manufactures; the other, the war in Europe, which closed the ports of the Continent to British trade. Another question which was much discussed at this time was the expediency of permitting a free resort to India of Englishmen not in the service of the East India Company.

Besides such questions as these, which, affecting as they did the personal interests of Englishmen, excited considerable interest in Parliament and throughout the country, there were others, connected with the internal administration of India—such as the system of land tenure, the judicial system, and the police—which underwent careful investigation, and in reference to which consultation was held with some of the most eminent Indian officials in England at the time. A searching inquiry was instituted by a Select Committee of the House of Commons, whose celebrated Fifth Report constitutes a most valuable repertory of information regarding the progress of Indian administration up to 1812.

On all the questions which were thus brought under investigation, Munro was consulted, and in most cases the information which he contributed, and the opinions which he expressed, largely influenced their settlement. The evidence given by him before the House of Commons, and the

promptitude and clearness of his replies, produced a most favourable impression. It was mainly, if not entirely, owing to his influence that the plan of applying the Bengal system of land revenue to the rest of India was finally abandoned, and the ryotwár system authorized for the districts in the Madras and Bombay Presidencies which had not been already brought under permanent settlement. His views on the judicial system and the police so highly commended themselves to the most influential persons at the Board of Control and in the Court of Directors, that it was resolved to send him back to Madras on a special commission, for the purpose of preparing on the spot a scheme for giving effect to them.

On the question of throwing open the trade Munro was in favour of tentative measures. He had little sympathy with the outcry raised against the Company's monopoly, which, in his opinion, had been the source of many great national advantages, enabling it to acquire the extensive dominions then under British rule in India. He observed:

These territories never could have been acquired, had there not existed a Company possessing the exclusive trade, directing their undivided attention constantly to India, and employing their funds in extending their dominions. The whole of the merchants of Britain, trading separately, could neither have undertaken nor accomplished so magnificent an enterprise.

The Company are willing that the trade should be thrown open to the port of London; but this, it is asserted, will not afford a wide enough range for the skill and enterprise of British merchants. But are these qualities monopolized by the outports? Have not the London merchants their full share, and have they not capital sufficient to carry on all the Indian trade which the most visionary

theorist can look for? If freedom of trade is claimed on the ground of right, and not of expediency, every port in the kingdom ought to enjoy it; for they have all the same right abstractedly. But unfortunately it is necessary to withhold the benefit from them, because the warehouse system and custom houses are not yet sufficiently spread along our coasts; or, in other words, because a great increase of smuggling would undoubtedly ensue. The East India Company are attacked from all quarters, as if they, alone in this kingdom, possessed exclusive privileges. But monopoly pervades all our institutions. All corporations are inimical to the natural rights of British subjects. The corn laws favour the landed interest at the expense of the public. The laws against the export of wool, and many others, are of the same nature; and likewise those by which West India commodities are protected, and enhanced in price. It would be better for the community that the West India planter should be permitted to export his produce direct to all countries, and that the duties on East India sugar, etc., should be lowered. When the petitioners against the Company complain that half the globe is shut against their skill and enterprise, and that they are debarred from passing the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn, and rushing into the seas beyond them, with their vessels deeply laden with British merchandise, they seem not to know that they may do so now; that all private traders may sail to the western coast of America, to the eastern coast of Africa, and to the Red Sea; and that India, China, and the intervening tract only are shut. Some advantage would undoubtedly accrue to the outports by the opening of the trade. But the question is, would this advantage compensate to the nation for the injury which the numerous establishments in the metropolis connected with India would sustain, and the risk of loss on the Company's sales, and of their trade by smuggling? . . .

It yet remains doubtful whether or not the trade can be greatly increased; and as it will not be denied that London has both capital and mercantile knowledge in abundance to make the trial on the greatest scale, the danger to be apprehended from all sudden innovations ought to induce us to proceed with caution, and rest satisfied for the present with opening the trade to the port of London. Let the experiment

be made; and if it should hereafter appear that London is unable to embrace the increasing trade, the privilege may then, on better grounds, and with less danger, be extended to other places. If Government cannot clearly establish that no material increase of smuggling, and no loss in the Company's sales, and consequent derangement of their affairs, would ensue from allowing the outports to import direct from India, they should consider that they are risking great certain benefits for a small contingent advantage.*

Munro did not anticipate any considerable increase in the demand for British manufactures by the natives of India, unless by very slow steps, and at a very distant period. He wrote:

No nation will take from another what it can furnish cheaper and better itself. In India, almost every article which the inhabitants require, is made cheaper and better than in Europe. Among these are all cotton and silk manufactures, leather, paper, domestic utensils of brass and iron, and implements of agriculture. Their coarse woollens, though bad, will always keep their ground from their superior cheapness: their finer camblets are warmer and more lasting than ours.

Glass-ware is in little request, except with a very few principal natives, and among them is confined to mirrors and lamps; and it is only such natives as are much connected with Europeans who purchase these articles. They keep them, not to gratify their own taste, but to display to their European friends, when they receive their occasional visits: at all other times they are put out of the way as useless incumbrances. Their simple mode of living, dictated both by caste and climate, renders all our furniture and ornaments for the decoration of the house and the table utterly unserviceable to the Hindus: living in low mud houses, eating on the bare earth, they cannot require the various articles used among us. They have no tables; their houses are not furnished, except those of the rich, which have a small carpet, or a few mats and pillows. The Hindus eat alone, many from caste in the open air, others under sheds, and out of

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 244–246.

leaves of trees in preference to plates. But this is the picture, perhaps, of the unfortunate native reduced to poverty by European oppression under the Company's monopoly? No, it is equally that of the highest and richest Hindu in every part of India. It is that of the Minister of State. His dwelling is little better than a shed: the walls are naked, and the mud floor, for the sake of coolness, is every morning sprinkled with a mixture of water and cow-dung. He has no furniture in it. He distributes food to whoever wants it, but he gives no grand dinners to his friends. He throws aside his upper garment, and, with nothing but a cloth round his loins, he sits down half-naked, and eats his meal alone, upon the bare earth, and under the open sky.*

In regard to imports from India, Munro remarked that India was capable of supplying to any extent most of the articles at that time imported, and that every measure by which the demand could be enlarged, and the supply facilitated, of those commodities which do not interfere with our own manufacture, would promote the national prosperity. The demand for Indian cotton goods in the English market had already begun to fall off, owing to the improvement of the manufacture in England, and Munro foresaw that it would fall still lower, though apparently he did not anticipate the great extent to which the native manufacture would be superseded, at no very distant date, by the products of the Lancashire mills. His views on the trade question, and his opposition to the complete abolition of the monopoly, if judged by the light which subsequent experience has thrown upon the subject, may perhaps appear to have been deficient in that sagacious foresight which usually characterized his opinions; but there is enough in the foregoing extracts to show that he was by no means ignorant of the true

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 236, 237.

principles of economic science,* and that he was only deterred from assenting to their immediate applica-

* Twelve years later, but many years before the principles of free trade had been thoroughly recognized in this country, Munro made the following remarks in a letter to a friend in Scotland with reference to Mr. Huskisson's commercial policy:— 'It is surprising to think that we 'should only just now be beginning to 'act upon them (the doctrines of 'Adam Smith): the delay is certainly 'not very creditable to our policy. 'Our best apology is perhaps the 'American and the French revolu-'tionary wars, during the long course 'of which the nation was so harassed 'that there was no time for changing 'the old system. The nation was 'just beginning to recover from the 'American war when the Revolution 'in France began, and had that 'event not taken place I have no 'doubt that Mr. Pitt would have done 'what we are now doing. I am not 'sure that you are not indebted to 'your old friend, the East India 'Company, for the measure not having 'been longer delayed. The attack 'upon their monopoly by the delegates 'in 1812–13 excited discussions, not 'only upon their privileges, but upon 'all privileges and restrictions and 'the true principles of trade, which 'probably prepared the minds of men 'for acceding to the new system 'sooner than they otherwise would 'have done. Even now there seems 'to be too much solicitude about 'protecting duties: they may for a 'limited time be expedient where 'capital cannot be easily withdrawn; 'but in all other cases why not abolish 'them at once? There is another 'point on which anxiety is shown 'where I think there ought to be 'none—I mean that of other nations 'granting similar remissions on our 'trade. Why should we trouble our-'selves about this? We ought surely 'not to be restrained from doing 'ourselves good, by taking their goods 'as cheap as we can get them, merely 'because they won't follow our ex-'ample. If they will not make our 'goods cheaper and take more of 'them, they will at least take what 'they did before; so that we suffer no 'loss on this, while we gain on the 'other side. I think it is better that 'we should have no engagements with 'foreign nations about reciprocal duties, 'and that it will be more convenient 'to leave them to their own discretion 'in fixing the rate, whether high or 'low. India is the country that has 'been worst used in the new arrange-'ment. All her products ought un-'doubtedly to be imported freely into 'England upon paying the same duties, 'and no more, which English products 'pay in India. When I see what is 'done in Parliament against India. 'I think that I am reading about 'Edward III. and the Flemings.'

The following remarks by Dr. Horace Hayman Wilson, in his 'Continuation of Mill's History of India,' which was published in 1845, on the history of the trade in cotton goods with India, serve to illustrate the latter part of the foregoing extract:— 'It is a melancholy instance of the 'wrong done to India by the country on 'which she had become dependent. It 'was stated in evidence that the 'cotton and silk goods of India, up to 'this period, could be sold for a profit 'in the British market at a price from 'fifty to sixty per cent. lower than 'those fabricated in England. It con-'sequently became necessary to pro-'tect the latter by duties of seventy 'and eighty per cent. on their value, or 'by positive prohibition. Had this 'not been the case, had not such pro-'hibitory duties and decrees existed, 'the mills of Paisley and of Man-'chester would have been stopped at 'their outset, and could scarcely have 'been again set in motion, even by the

tion to the case under discussion by a consideration of the peculiar and anomalous circumstances under which the British Empire in India, at that time still in a condition of growth, had been formed, and by the conservative tendency which disinclined him to alter any existing institutions that notwithstanding occasional defects, were on the whole working well, for the sake of theoretical advantages, the certainty of which had not been established.

Munro was also opposed to the unrestricted admission of Europeans into India, but his objections on this point do not seem to have been very strong. Owing to the commercial habits of the natives, and the superior economy of their mode of life, he saw no prospect of any considerable number of Europeans being able to make a livelihood in the country. He said in his evidence before the House of Commons:

The people of India are as much a nation of shopkeepers as we are ourselves. They never lose sight of the shop: they carry it into all their concerns, religious and civil. All their holy places and resorts for pilgrims are so many fairs for the sale of goods of all kinds. Religion and trade are in India sister arts: the one is seldom found in any large assembly without the society of the other. It is this trading disposition of the natives which induces me to think it impossible that

'powers of steam. They were created 'by the sacrifice of the Indian manu-'facture. Had India been indepen-'dent, she would have retaliated; 'would have imposed preventive duties 'upon British goods, and would thus 'have preserved her own productive 'industry from annihilation. This act 'of self-defence was not permitted to 'her: she was at the mercy of the 'stranger. British goods were forced 'upon her without paying any duty; 'and the foreign manufacturer em-'ployed the arm of political injustice 'to keep down and ultimately strangle 'a competitor with whom he could 'not have contended on equal terms.'

These facts may well be pondered by the statesmen and manufacturers, who, in the interests of Lancashire, are now bent upon depriving India of the revenue which she derives from a moderate import duty upon cotton goods, and which she can ill afford to lose.

any European traders can long remain in the interior of India, and that they must all sooner or later be driven to the coast. What the European trader eats and drinks in one month, would make a very decent mercantile profit for the Hindu for twelve. They do not, therefore, meet upon equal terms: it is like two persons purchasing in the same market, the one paying a high duty, the other none. The extra duty paid by the European is all the difference between his own mode of living and that of the Hindu.*

But the subjects upon which Munro's opinions deservedly carried most weight, were those connected with the organization of the army and the great departments of the civil administration, viz. the revenue, the judicial system, and the police. On the first of these questions Munro was a high authority. He had served in all the campaigns against Hyder Ali and Tippoo after 1780, and had been a close observer of the recent campaign against the Mahrattas. Although so much employed on civil duties, he was a soldier at heart, and the satisfaction which he could not help feeling at his success as a civil administrator, was often mingled with regrets at being debarred from opportunities of advancement in his own profession. While deeply impressed with the necessity of maintaining an adequate British force in India, and conscious of the risk to which that empire must always be exposed from defection on the part of the native troops, he had a good opinion of those troops, and believed that their fidelity might be insured by considerate and judicious treatment. The best way, he considered, of insuring the fidelity of our native troops was to show no distrust, but confidence at all times, to treat them well and keep them occupied, to bring

* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 232.

all the corps at certain fixed periods back to their respective native districts, and to take care that none of them were permitted to remain too long in any place where they were likely to be tampered with by any native chief. His views as to the number of European officers required for a native regiment were very similar to those which have been acted on since the mutiny of 1857. He regarded the establishment of European officers provided by the organization of 1796 to be excessive, and he disapproved of the plan of appointing young officers on first obtaining their commissions to native regiments. His opinion was that every officer on first going out to India should be employed one or two years with a European regiment, until he had learnt his duty, and that 'he ought not to be transferred 'to a sepoy corps until, by previously serving with 'a European one, he had made himself master of 'all his duties, and likewise, by being in some de-'gree acquainted with the character of the natives, 'qualified to command and to act with sepoys.'* He greatly deprecated a proposal which about that time had been made to abolish the Company's European regiments, and on the contrary, was in favour of adding to their number both in infantry and in cavalry.

Enough has been already said of Munro's views on revenue matters. The judicial and police arrangements which had been carried out in Bengal under regulations passed by Lord Cornwallis in 1793, and had been introduced in the Madras Presidency in the earlier years of the present century, were regarded by Munro as involving too great a departure

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 105, 106.

from native institutions to work with success. In both Presidencies there were great complaints of inordinate delay in the disposal of civil suits, and of inefficiency in the repression of crime. The Judge of a district was also Magistrate, and although a stationary officer, was invested with the superintendence of the police. In both Presidencies there were native judges who disposed of suits of small value, but their salaries were too small to command either efficiency or integrity, and their numbers too limited to enable them to render material aid in disposing of the vast amount of litigation, which was one of the earliest results of settled government. Munro strongly advocated the revival of the native institution called 'pancháyat'—a court of arbitration composed of five or more persons—and the transfer of the duty of superintending the police from the Judge to the Collector, who, moving frequently about his district, and mixing with the people, had better means of effectively supervising the police than were available to a stationary judicial officer. The union, for similar reasons, of the offices of Collector and Magistrate, and the utilization of the village officials to deal with petty offences and with petty suits, were also included in his proposals. Instructions in the sense of Munro's recommendations were sent to the two Presidencies, and in the summer of 1814 he sailed for Madras to carry out the special commission to which he had been appointed.

CHAPTER VI.

Munro's marriage—Sentiments on returning to India—Arrival at Madras—Judicial Commission—Difficulties attending it—Its results—Munro's resumption of military employment—Foreign policy of the Government of India since Lord Wellesley's retirement—Lord Moira's views—Mr. Canning's—Pindári incursions—Preparations for war—Munro sent to the Southern Mahratta country—Appointed a brigadier-general—Southern Mahratta campaign—Mr. Canning's eulogium—Onerous nature of Munro's duties—Friendly relations with Mr. Elphinstone and Sir John Malcolm—Munro's opinion of the Mahrattas—Of the Pindáris—Of subsidiary alliances—His return to England.

PUBLIC affairs, much as they occupied Munro's time, were not the only matters which engaged his attention during his stay in England. A few weeks before he sailed for India, he married Miss Jane Campbell, one of the daughters of Mr. Richard Campbell, of Craigie House, Ayrshire—a beautiful and accomplished woman, whose picture by Sir Thomas Lawrence hangs opposite that of the late Marchioness of Tweeddale in the drawing-room of the Government House at Madras. The marriage appears to have been a very happy one. In Mrs. Munro, or to use the name by which she is best remembered, Lady Munro, he found a wife eminently qualified not only to insure his domestic happiness, but to adorn the high position which a few years later he was destined to fill.

Munro's feelings on proceeding a second time to

India were very much those which so many Anglo-Indians have experienced under similar circumstances. Writing to his sister from Portsmouth on the eve of embarkation, he says, 'I was in this place 'thirty-five years ago, and much more impatient than 'now to reach my destination; for my head was full 'of bright visions, which have now passed away. 'I now, I am sorry to say, go out, not to hopes, but 'to certainties, knowing exactly the situation in 'which I am to be employed, what I am to have, 'and when I am to return. This, to many people, 'would be very comfortable; to me it is dull and 'uninteresting.' * They reached Madras on the 16th of September, and became at once involved in a vortex of visits, which in India are paid in the hottest hours of the day. In a letter written about a fortnight after their arrival, he says, 'I have 'been attending to nothing but visits. The first 'operation on landing is for the stranger to visit all 'married people, whether he knows them or not. 'Bachelors usually first call on him. Then his visits 'are returned. Then his wife visits the ladies, and 'altogether there is such calling and gossiping and 'driving all over the face of the country in an old 'hack chaise in the heat of the day, that I can hardly 'believe myself in the same place, where I used, in 'former times, to come quietly, without a single 'formal visit.'

Notwithstanding, however, these social labours, Munro speedily set to work on the business of his commission. The duty which had been assigned to him was by no means free from difficulties. There were not only the inherent difficulties of the task of

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 442.

re-modelling a system of police and judicature, civil as well as criminal, adapted to the habits and character of the natives of India, and at the same time suited to the advancing civilization which peace and settled government were certain to bring in their train, but there was the exterior difficulty of the antagonism of the local authorities to any change in the system then in force. Allusion has been made to the opposition which the ryotwár settlement encountered from the Madras civil servants. There can be no doubt that from the first, on the part of the members of that service, with a few honourable exceptions, there was a perhaps not unnatural jealousy of the military Collectors, of whom Munro was the foremost; and when to this feeling was superadded, in the minds of some, a sincere conviction, however erroneous, that the measures introduced by Lord Cornwallis, and supported by all the weight of the authority of his gifted successor, Lord Wellesley, were founded upon sound principles of fiscal and juridical science, it can scarcely be a matter of surprise that the commission entrusted to Munro, which was supposed to include within its scope far more sweeping changes than were really contemplated, should have been viewed with disfavour. The Governor of the Presidency, Mr. Elliot, whose previous career had been in the diplomatic service,* had taken charge of his office on the same day on which Munro landed at Madras, and was therefore of necessity very dependent upon his constituted advisers in the Council and the

* Mr. Elliot is not the only Governor of Madras who had previously occupied the position of ambassador at a foreign Court. Lord Napier also went from an embassy to Madras, and it so happens that in both cases the embassy exchanged for the government was that of Berlin.

Secretariat; and though he appears to have had every disposition to treat Munro with consideration, it was perhaps hardly in his power to prevent a certain amount of obstruction being offered to the business of the Commission. And new as he was to the country, and unacquainted with native institutions and requirements, it was not difficult for those by whom he was surrounded, and upon whose experience he naturally placed a considerable amount of reliance, to convince him that some of the changes proposed were inexpedient. Mr. Elliot, Munro wrote—

received an impression very soon after his arrival that everything was in the best possible state; that an approximation had been gradually making of late years to the system proposed in the judicial despatch of the 29th April, 1814; that much of it, in fact, had been anticipated; that more could hardly be done without danger; that great improvements had taken place since I left India; and that were I now to visit the districts, I would abandon all my former opinions and acknowledge that the Collector could not be entrusted with the magisterial and police duties without injury to the country. Though I knew that there was no foundation for these assertions, it appeared to me necessary to wade through all the police reports and the proceedings of the Committee, in order that I might be enabled to assure Mr. Elliot, not as an opinion of my own, but as a fact drawn from these documents, that things remained just as they were seven years ago.*

The opposition continuing, Munro, in a later letter, addressed to an official at the Board of Control, deemed it necessary to point out that if it was expected that the instructions of the Home Government were to be obeyed, the strongest and plainest words must be used. 'For instance,' he wrote, 'the expressions, "It is our wish," "It is our

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. pp. 457, 458.

'intention," "We propose," do not, it is maintained 'here, convey orders, but merely recommendations. 'Unless the words, "We direct," "We order," are 'employed, the measures to which they relate will 'be regarded as optional.'

Again:

No orders have yet been issued for carrying into effect the instructions contained in the judicial despatch of the 29th April, 1814, and the Commission consequently still remains at Madras.

Mr. Elliot tells me that the resolutions of Government are printing for circulation, and that they correspond nearly with my view of it, except in not transferring the office of Magistrate to the Collector; but this is the most essential part of the whole, for without it the Collector will be merely the head darogah of police under the Zillah Judge, and the new system will be completely insufficient. No time should therefore be lost in sending out by the first conveyance a short letter stating the heads of alterations in the present system which are imperative, and not optional with the Government here, and ordering them, not recommending, to be carried into immediate execution.*

Six months later, after he had been nearly a year in Madras awaiting orders, Munro wrote:

The resolutions of Government of the 1st March and my letters will have informed you how little has been done, that no one thing has been finally done, that different points of the judicial despatch have been referred to the Sadr Adálat, the Board of Revenue, and the Commission, that they are respectively to call upon the local officers for their opinions on certain points, and that they are then to frame the Regulations.

These Regulations, when framed, will be some months with the Sadr Adálat, who will report upon them to Government, and Government will then send them to Bengal for the sanction of the Supreme Government. Some months will elapse before this sanction is granted: they must then be

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 463.

translated, which will consume some months more, and by the time they can be circulated to all the districts, the Commission will have expired. The six Regulations drawn up by the Commission have been with the Sadr Adálat about two months, and it is quite uncertain how much longer they may remain with them. Only one will be circulated without reference to Bengal. It is that which transfers the police, but not the office of Magistrate, to the Collector, and will not do any good. The Council will oppose the promulgation of the rest without the authority of the Supreme Government. They will therefore be sent to Bengal, and as Lord Moira proposes that the two Governments should deliberate maturely on the whole subject of the judicial despatch, and 'avail 'themselves of the advantages of a mutual interchange of 'sentiments and suggestions, in the course of the deliberations 'respecting so serious an object,' it may be some years before they are issued. Why should we amuse ourselves with interchanges of sentiments on things which have undergone a ten years' discussion, and which the Government at home has directed to be adopted? Or of what use can it be to import sentiments from Bengal on pancháyats and potails * which most of the public servants in that Presidency profess never to have heard of. I see no way of enabling the Commission to answer any of the objects of its institution, but by sending out orders without delay to the Government here to carry into immediate execution, without reference to, or waiting for an answer from, Bengal to any reference that may have been made, all those modifications on which the Government at home have already made up their mind.†

At last, however, the operations of the Commission were allowed to proceed, and in 1816 a series of enactments framed by it, and embodying all the leading features of the scheme of police and judicial reform advocated by Munro, and sanctioned by the Court of Directors and Board of Control, was passed by the Madras Government. In framing these measures, which, in the legislative phraseology

† See Minutes, vol. i. p. 48, footnote.

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 468.

of that time, were styled Regulations, Munro was assisted by Mr. Stratton, one of the Judges of the Court of Sadr Adálat, then the chief Court of Appeal and Revision, who at his request had been associated with him on the Commission. The new Regulations effected important changes in the administration of the police and judicature. They transferred the superintendence of the police, and also the functions of Magistrate of the district, from the Judge to the Collector. They expressly recognized the employment of the hereditary village officials in the performance of police duties, and empowered the headmen of villages to hear and determine petty suits. They extended the powers of native judges, they simplified the rules of practice in the courts, and legalized a system of village and district panchâyats, or courts of arbitration—a system to which, as being adapted to native habits and usages, Munro attached special importance. Of the changes thus introduced, it may be said that they were all decided improvements upon the state of things which they superseded, in that they tended to simplify judicial procedure, to utilize native agency to a far greater extent than had yet been tried, to obviate delays in the administration of justice which had become a scandal, and to substitute a system of police superintendence which might possibly work, for one which, from the nature of the case, was necessarily useless. Some of these measures have stood the test of the experience of half a century, and have been extended in principle, if not in form, throughout India. The policy of entrusting the superintendence of the police and the duties of chief Magistrate to the administrative head

of the district is now universally recognized, and within the last two years the various administrations have been invited to consider the expediency of extending the Madras system of village tribunals to their respective provinces. On two points, however, the reforms of 1816 have not answered the expectations of their authors. The pancháyat system has been so little resorted to, that it may be said to have been practically inoperative, owing probably to the fact that while it was a system adapted to a rude and primitive state of society, and which the people were ready to avail themselves of so long as there was nothing better available, it was less suited to a more advanced civilization, and could hardly be expected to maintain its place by the side of regular courts of justice, which, with all their faults, speedily won the confidence of the natives of India.* Of the

* In one of his Minutes on the judicial administration, written when Governor of Madras, Munro says of the pancháyat: 'There was nothing in 'which our judicial code on its first 'establishment departed more widely 'from the usage of the country than in 'the disuse of the pancháyat. When 'this ancient institution was intro-'duced into our code in 1816, there was 'so much objection to it, both at home 'and in this country, lest it should 'become an instrument of abuse, that 'it was placed under so many re-'strictions as to deprive it of much of 'its utility. It was unknown to some 'of the Company's servants as any-'thing more than a mode of arbi-'tration; it was known by others to 'have been employed by the natives 'in the decision of civil suits, and 'even of criminal cases, but it was 'imagined to have been so employed, 'not because they liked it, but because 'they had nothing better; and it was 'opposed by some very intelligent men 'on the ground of its form and pro-'ceedings being altogether so irre-'gular as to be quite incompatible 'with the system of our courts. All 'doubts as to the popularity of pan-'cháyats among the natives must now 'have been removed by the reports of 'some of the ablest servants of the 'Company, which explain their nature 'and show that they were in general 'use over extensive provinces. The 'defects of the pancháyat are better 'known to natives than to us; yet, 'with all its defects, they hold it in 'so much reverence that they say, '"Where the jury sits, God is present." 'In many ordinary cases the pancháyat 'is clear and prompt in its decisions; 'but when complicated accounts are 'to be examined, it is often extremely 'dilatory. It adjourns frequently: 'when it meets again some of the 'members are often absent, and it 'sometimes happens that a substitute 'takes the part of an absent member. 'All this is no doubt extremely irre-

police system which was introduced by Munro, it may be said that it was better than that which it superseded, and that the attempt to impart life and energy to the ancient institution of village police was sound in principle, and has in some parts of the country been fairly successful in practice ; but the union of police and revenue functions in the native stipendiary officials of the revenue department, such as tahsildárs, amildárs, etc., has proved to have been a mistake. This part of the machinery not only in many instances failed in the detection and repression of crime, but was too often a prolific source of oppression. It has for some years been superseded by a separate body of stipendiary police working under the general supervision of the district Magistrate.

The period for which the Judicial Commission was appointed was three years, but before that term had expired, circumstances occurred which led to Munro's re-employment for a time in a military capacity.

During the twelve years which had elapsed since the retirement of Lord Wellesley, the policy of non-

'gular. But the native government 'itself is despotic and irregular, and 'everything under it must partake of 'its nature. These irregularities are, 'however, all susceptible of gradual 'correction ; and indeed even now 'they are not found in practice to 'produce half the inconvenience that 'might be expected from them by 'men who have been accustomed to 'the exact forms of English courts of 'judicature.' Munro was in favour of withdrawing all suits below a certain amount from the jurisdiction of the regular courts, and transferring them to pancháyats. He was also in favour of extending the principle of the system to criminal trials by the employment of a jury, a measure which is now sanctioned by the Indian Code of Criminal Procedure, and is in force in some parts of the country; but however well founded Munro's impressions may have been regarding the popularity of the pancháyat system, as a mode of deciding civil disputes, before the establishment of the regular courts, and notwithstanding that Munro's views have been shared by other eminent men in more recent times, it has not, as a matter of fact, been found possible to give any vitality to the system.

interference with the native princes, or what in these days would be called the policy of masterly inactivity, which had long been prescribed in vain by the Home authorities, had exercised full sway over the counsels of the Indian authorities at Calcutta, as well as in London. Lord Cornwallis, who was appointed Governor-General for the second time on Lord Wellesley's retirement, had gone out to India armed with the most emphatic instructions, both from the India House and from the Board of Control, with the wisdom of which he was himself deeply impressed, to reverse the foreign policy of his predecessor. During the few weeks that he survived his resumption of office, he had done his best to undo the results of the victories achieved by Lord Wellesley over the Mahrattas, and to give the Mahratta chiefs full power to re-establish their authority in Hindustan. He had resolved to abandon to the tender mercies of Sindia and Holkar the less powerful chiefs of Rájputána and Central India, to whom Lord Wellesley had guaranteed the protection of the British Government; and he had gone so far as to order that peace should be made with Sindia, who was at that time forcibly detaining the British Resident at his court. Owing to the manly opposition offered by the Commander-in-Chief, Lord Lake, the latter measure was delayed until the British Resident had been released; but the general policy, so far as the north of India was concerned, had been carried out by Sir George Barlow, who, on Lord Cornwallis's death, succeeded for a time to the Governor-Generalship, and who, it may be remarked, as long as Lord Wellesley remained in India, had been a cordial supporter

of his measures. Lord Minto, who held the Government from 1807 until the autumn of 1813, was a statesman of a different type. He checked Runjeet Sing's designs upon the protected Sikh states in Sirhind. He sent an army to defend the Nagpúr state, at that time in alliance with the British, against the incursions of Amír Khán, a Patháu chief who for years ravaged Rájputána and Central India; and he urgently pressed upon the Home authorities the necessity of interfering for the protection of other weak and defenceless states which were at that time exposed to the ravages of the Pindáris; but the policy of strict neutrality was still in the ascendant in Leadenhall Street and at the Board of Control, and the inhabitants of Central India and the Deccan were left for some years longer a prey to outrage and disorder. Lord Minto's successor, the Earl of Moira, shortly afterwards created Marquis of Hastings, who held the Governor-Generalship at the time of which we write, had gone out deeply impressed with the unwisdom of Lord Wellesley's policy, and resolved to maintain the system of non-interference prescribed by the Home Government; but he had not been long in India before he came to the conclusion that, if the British position in that country was to be upheld, the only safety lay in establishing British supremacy throughout India, by holding the other states 'as 'vassals, though not in name,' and obliging them, 'in return for our guarantee and protection, to per'form the two great feudatory functions of support'ing our rule with all their forces, and submitting 'their mutual differences to our arbitration.' It was not without difficulty that Lord Moira overcame the

reluctance of his official superiors to sanction any measures that might possibly result in further entensions of territory. This was a question upon which successive Presidents of the Board of Control held views quite in harmony with those which from the first had been held by the Court of Directors. Lord Castlereagh, Lord Buckinghamshire, and Mr. Canning were as much opposed to any increase of British territory or of British responsibilities in India as the most commercial members of the Court of Directors. Mr. Canning was, if anything, the most decided of the ministers in his opposition to any renewal of the policy of advance. He was 'unwilling 'to incur the risk of a general war for the uncertain 'purpose of extirpating the Pindáris.' He was prepared even to invoke the aid of Sindia for the protection of the British territories from Pindári incursions. Referring to information sent home as to the suspicious behaviour of certain Mahratta chieftains and daring movements on the part of the Pindáris, he caused a despatch to be addressed to the Governor-General in Council by the Secret Committee of the Court of Directors, in which they were made to express 'a strong hope that the 'dangers which arise from both these causes, and 'which *must perhaps always* exist in a greater or 'less degree, may, by a judicious management of our 'existing relations, be prevented from bearing upon 'us in any very formidable force; while, on the other 'hand, any attempt at this moment to establish a 'new system of policy tending to a wider diffusion 'of our power, must necessarily interfere with those 'economical regulations which it is more than ever 'incumbent upon us to recommend as indispensable

'to the maintenance of our present ascendency, and 'by exciting the jealousy and suspicion of other 'states, may too probably produce or mature those 'very projects of hostile confederacy which con-'stitute the chief object of your apprehension.' *

It must be admitted that some of the views expressed in the foregoing passages were not without a semblance of justification in the circumstances of the Government of India at that time. The financial position was extremely alarming. The charges incurred by Lord Wellesley's wars had imposed a heavy burthen upon the exchequer. A war with the Gúrkhas of Nepál, which had been forced upon Lord Moira shortly after his arrival at Calcutta by their invasion of our territory, had found the treasury nearly empty, and the credit of the Government so low in the money market that the Governor-General was compelled to borrow two crores of rupees (two millions sterling) from the Nawáb of Oudh. And it must be remembered that though the trade with India had been thrown open, the East India Company was still a trading body, established for the purposes of commerce, rather than for the purposes of conquest, and therefore not unnaturally averse to increase responsibilities, already sufficiently onerous, the financial result of which it was impossible to foresee. Nor can it be a matter for surprise that the brilliant statesman who at that time presided at the Board of Control, himself the representative of a great commercial constituency, and in constant communication with the leading members of the Court of Directors, should have been induced for a

* Wilson's 'Continuation of Mill's History of India,' vol. viii. p. 203, footnote.

time to regard the financial aspect of the situation as one of greater gravity than the political.

But on this, as on former occasions, the force of events outweighed the apprehensions of economists, and upset the theories of those who opposed the further extension of the British power in India. A bold raid made by the Pindáris into British territory on the Coromandel coast, accompanied by circumstances of the greatest atrocity,* intelligence of which reached England very shortly after the despatch above quoted had been sent out, convinced the Home Government that the policy inculcated in it must be abandoned, and that effective steps must be taken to vindicate the British name, and to defend the people who looked to us for protection. In the revised instructions which were thereupon sent out, it was significantly added that 'any 'connection of Sindia and Holkar with the Pindáris 'against us or our allies would place them in a state 'of direct hostilities to us.'

Before these orders reached India the aggressions of the Pindáris had forced the British authorities to act against them. Two expeditions had already taken place, and at the end of 1816, while the permissive despatch of the Court of Directors was still on its way, the Governor-General in Council had resolved on assembling a considerable force for the complete extirpation of these audacious freebooters. The war which followed was conducted upon a more extensive scale than any which had yet been under-

* On this occasion in the course of ten days three hundred and thirty-nine villages were plundered and many of them burnt, one hundred and eighty-two persons were put to death, five hundred wounded, and three thousand six hundred subjected to torture, while the loss of property exceeded twenty-five lakhs of rupees. —Marshman's History of India, vol. ii. p. 313.

taken. The armies of the three Presidencies were called out, and including irregulars and the contingents of the Nizam, Mysore, and other native chiefs, the force amounted to 116,000 infantry and cavalry, with 300 guns. The result was not only the extirpation of the Pindáris, but the dethronement of the Peshwa, the annexation of the greater part of his dominions as British territory, the reduction of Sindia and Holkar to the position of feudatories, the release of the native states in Málwa and Rájputána from Mahratta domination, and the establishment of British supremacy throughout the whole of India to the banks of the Sutlej. Before the British forces were put in motion, the Governor-General had become aware that a confederacy had been formed between the Mahratta powers, of which the Peshwa was the centre, to oppose the British. The Peshwa had been secretly hostile ever since the Treaty of Bassein, under which his independence had been impaired by the subsidiary alliance imposed upon him by Lord Wellesley; and that hostility had been intensified, a few months before the war began, by an enforced cession of territory which Lord Moira compelled him to make in consequence of the discovery of intrigues in which he was implicated.

By the prompt and decided action of the Governor-General, who also combined with that office the functions of Commander-in-Chief, Sindia was detached from the confederacy; but before the end of the year the Peshwa, the Rájá of Berár, and the troops of Holkar had broken into hostilities, the two former making unsuccessful attacks upon the British Residents stationed at their respective capitals, while Holkar's troops, advancing towards

the Deccan to the support of the Peshwa, encountered and were defeated by Sir Thomas Hislop's division at the battle of Mahidpúr.

As soon as it became plain that an important war was impending, Munro applied to the Governor-General for a military command. His application was not in the first instance successful; and after all that has been said and written of late years regarding the impolicy of entrusting military commands to officers who have long been employed upon civil duties, it may appear on a superficial view of the matter that the hesitation to comply with Munro's wishes was not unreasonable. But Munro's case was a very exceptional one. He had served in every campaign in which the Madras army had been engaged since 1780, with the exception of General Wellesley's brief campaign against the Mahrattas in 1803; and although he had been employed for some years in a civil capacity, the nature of that employment, owing to the disturbed condition of the districts administered by him, had been such as to call into frequent exercise those qualities of self-reliance, decision, and readiness of resource which go so far to insure efficiency in military command. Moreover, his military ability was well known and fully recognized by the highest military authorities, and it was not, therefore, without mortification that when the distribution of commands was settled, he found himself passed over in favour of officers junior to him in military rank. But although Munro was denied a command with the forces sent in advance, he speedily obtained employment in which he was able to render valuable services, first in a civil or semi-military capacity, and very shortly afterwards

in the direction of important military operations, the brilliancy of which, considering the slender means at his disposal, has seldom been surpassed. Mention has been made of the cession of certain districts which had been exacted from the Peshwa a few months before the war began. For the charge of these districts, bordering upon Mysore and upon the Company's territory in Canara and Ballári, an able and resolute officer was required, and the choice naturally fell upon Munro. Anxious as he was for strictly military employment, it was not without reluctance that he accepted another civil charge; but upon its being explained to him that his employment upon this particular duty was considered to be highly desirable on public grounds, he acquiesced in the decision, and proceeded to Dhárwár to take charge of the newly acquired territory, the military as well as civil command of which was placed under him.

Shortly after his arrival, and before hostilities with the Peshwa had commenced, Munro was ordered, with the small force under his command at Dhárwár, to effect the reduction of Sundúr, a small principality at the extreme south of the Southern Mahratta country, the chief of which had managed for twenty-one years to maintain a position of complete independence. The expedition was sent at the request of the Peshwa, with whom there was an engagement of some standing on the part of the Company to effect the reduction of the Sundúr chief. The latter, conscious of the superiority of the British power, immediately on the arrival of the force surrendered his fortress and territory, which, after the conclusion of the war and the deposition of

the Peshwa, were restored to him on Munro's recommendation. While Munro was engaged upon this expedition, the war broke out, and he was at once invested with the rank of brigadier-general and the command of the reserve division, formed to reduce the Southern Mahratta country and to oppose the forces of the Peshwa, who, after his unsuccessful attack upon the Poona Residency, had moved southwards.

Some time elapsed before Munro was in a position to enter upon his new command, a considerable body of the enemy having occupied the country which lay between him and the division assigned to him; but he did not allow this difficulty to reduce him to inaction. With the small force at his disposal, consisting at first of only five companies of infantry, one gun, and a mortar, and subsequently increased by a small battering train, seven additional companies of Native Infantry, four companies of pioneers, and three troops of Native Cavalry, Munro entered the enemy's country and captured fort after fort in succession, placing in each, as he took it, a garrison of peons—a sort of irregular militia—and then moving on with his small force to another. Of these Badámi and Belgaum were both fortresses of considerable strength. These operations occupied Munro from the beginning of December to the 18th of April, when he was joined by the main body of his division, and, marching without loss of time to Sholapúr, captured the fortified pettah, or city, of that place by assault on the 10th of May, the citadel capitulating two days later. With the reduction of Sholapúr, the subjugation of the Southern Mahratta country was complete; and the troops

having moved into cantonments, Munro, whose health was very indifferent, relinquished his command and prepared to return to England. The vigour and skill with which this campaign was conducted, the smallness of the force employed during the greater part of it, and the importance of the results achieved, at once proved Munro's capacity as a military commander; but no amount of generalship would have enabled him to accomplish so much in the time, with the extremely inadequate force at his disposal during the greater part of the operations, had it not been for his thorough insight into the political situation and the influence which he was able to exert over the people of the country. In the latter respect the reputation which a few years before he had established in the adjoining district of Ballári, stood him in good stead. To the Canarese agriculturists of the Southern Mahratta Provinces he was known by repute as a just and considerate ruler; and accordingly, in his military operations, he met with support instead of opposition from the people of the country. Munro's services on this occasion elicited high praise from the Governor-General; and when, after the termination of the war, Mr. Canning moved in the House of Commons a vote of thanks to the army and its commanders, he referred to Munro in terms of panegyric such as seldom have been applied to a public servant.

At the southern extremity (Mr. Canning said) of this long line of operations, and in a part of the campaign carried on in a district far from public gaze, and without the opportunities of early special notice, was employed a man whose name I should indeed have been sorry to have passed over in silence. I allude to Colonel Thomas Munro, a gentleman of

whose rare qualifications the late House of Commons had opportunities of judging at their bar, on the renewal of the East India Company's charter, and than whom Europe never produced a more accomplished statesman, nor India, so fertile in heroes, a more skilful soldier. This gentleman, whose occupations for some years must have been rather of a civil and administrative than a military nature, was called early in the war to exercise abilities which, though dormant, had not rusted from disuse. He went into the field with not more than five or six hundred men, of whom a very small proportion were Europeans, and marched into the Mahratta territories to take possession of the country which had been ceded to us by the treaty of Poona. The population which he subjugated by arms, he managed with such address, equity, and wisdom, that he established an empire over their hearts and feelings. Nine forts were surrendered to him or taken by assault on his way, and at the end of a silent and scarcely observed progress, he emerged from a territory heretofore hostile to the British interest, with an accession instead of a diminution of force, leaving everything secure and tranquil behind him. This result speaks more than could be told by any minute and extended commentary.

During the whole of these operations much of Munro's time was occupied with the discharge of civil functions; for, in addition to the arduous duties of his military command, he retained the office of Commissioner for the districts ceded by the treaty of Poona. He was his own civil and political officer, and until the head-quarters of the reserve division joined him, he had no military staff. Writing on the 24th of March to his friend and colleague in the Judicial Commission at Madras, Mr. Stratton, who had applied to him for assistance in some matter connected with the business of that Commission, which he was engaged in winding up, Munro says:—

I can be of no use to you while the war lasts. I shall never be able to command six hours' leisure, which you think

enough; and even if I had this leisure, I should be thinking of more immediate concerns than laws and regulations. I have five and twenty amildárs on my hands, with a list of about seven thousand peons, or what is called in the newspapers, irregular infantry. I have also the command of regular troops, the political management of the southern jágírdárs, and much more than I can well attend to. I should be delighted to have a few weeks' leisure with you at Madras to finish whatever is wanting; but you must expect nothing from me while I am on this side of the Tongabadra. You can do what is wanting yourself better than any one else.*

Munro's duties at this time brought him into constant correspondence, both official and private, with Mr. Mountstuart Elphinstone, then Resident at the Court of the Peshwa, and shortly afterwards Governor of Bombay, of whose ability Munro entertained a high opinion, and with whom his relations were most cordial. Another frequent correspondent was Sir John Malcolm, Munro's colleague at Seringapatam in 1799, between whom and Munro there had ever since existed a fast friendship. When one thinks of the personal jealousies which in India, as in other parts of the world, so often disturb the relations of public officers to the great detriment of the public service, it is refreshing to observe the utter absence of all such feelings in the intercourse of these three eminent men. Thus, when the question of the arrangements to be made for the management of the newly conquered provinces was under consideration, we find Munro writing to Malcolm that nobody was so well qualified for the duty as Elphinstone; and when the military operations in that part of the country had been completed by the capture of Sholapúr, we see Elphinstone foremost in bringing to notice the brilliancy of the services rendered

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. p. 61.

by Munro; while at an early stage of the operations Malcolm describes them in the following glowing terms:—

I send you a copy of a public letter from *Tom Munro Sahib*, written for the information of Sir Thomas Hislop. If this letter makes the same impression upon you that it did upon me, we shall all recede as this extraordinary man comes forward. We use common vulgar means, and go on zealously and actively and courageously enough; but how different is his part in the drama! Insulated in an enemy's country, with no military means whatever (five disposable companies of sepoys were nothing), he forms the plan of subduing the country, expelling the army by which it is occupied, and collecting the revenues that are due to the enemy, through the means of the inhabitants themselves, aided and supported by a few irregular infantry whom he invites from the neighbouring provinces for that purpose. His plan, which is at once simple and great, is successful in a degree which a mind like his could alone have anticipated. The country comes into his hands by the most legitimate of all modes, the zealous and spirited efforts of the natives to place themselves under his rule and to enjoy the benefits of a government which, when administered by a man like him, is one of the best in the world. Munro, they say, has been aided in this great work by his local reputation, but *that* adds to his title to praise. His popularity in the quarter where he is placed is the result of long experience of his talents and virtues, and rests exactly upon that basis of which an able and good man may be proud.*

The letters written by Munro about this time contain interesting remarks on various matters connected with the political situation. Nearer acquaintance with the Mahrattas and their system had led him to form a more unfavourable opinion of their power for mischief than at one time he had entertained. He wrote:

The Mahratta Government has been one of the most destructive that ever existed in India. It never relinquished

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. p. 61.

the predatory spirit of its founder, Sivají. That spirit grew with its power, and when its empire extended from the Ganges to the Cávery, this nation was little better than a horde of imperial thieves. All other Hindu states took a pride in the improvement of the country, and in the construction of pagodas, tanks, canals, and other public works. The Mahrattas have done nothing of this kind: their work has been chiefly desolation. They did not seek their revenue in the improvement of the country, but in the exactions of the established chout from their neighbours and in predatory incursions to levy more.*

Again:

It is fortunate for India that the Peshwa commenced hostilities and forced us to overthrow his power, for the Mahratta Government from its foundation has been one of devastation. It was continually destroying all within its reach and never repairing. The effect of such a system has been the diminution of the wealth and population of a great portion of the peninsula of India.†

On the other hand, Munro considered the power and the numerical strength of the Pindáris to have been from the first greatly exaggerated. He did not estimate the aggregate number of their troops at more than seven or eight thousand men.

All the possessions of the Pindáris were confined to a few small districts in Málwa, which would not have maintained half that number. If we suppose that as many more were maintained by plunder, it is making a great allowance; for plundering, though destructive to the inhabitants, is not always profitable to the plunderers, who often lose more than they gain, by various accidents, before they reach their homes through a hostile country. The Pindári chiefs cannot bring large bodies into the field; but it is a part of their system to magnify their force, in order to strike terror and to prevent resistance. Secrecy and expedition are essential to their success, and it is only in small parties that they can move rapidly and elude pursuit.‡

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. p. 14. † Ibid., p. 77. ‡ Ibid., p. 67.

They never would have ventured to enter our territory, had they not discovered that we were restrained from following them into their own. This conduct of the Indian Government, which I suppose was owing to orders from home, produced the consequence which everybody here foresaw. The Pindáris, when they saw that they had nothing to fear if they could only get safe back with their plunder to their own country, were encouraged to repeat their depredations in ours.*

It will be remembered that at one time Munro was an ardent supporter of the system of subsidiary alliances with native states. He had now come to the conclusion that any further development of the system was inexpedient. The increased power of the British Government in India, and the comparative weakness of the native states, combined with other considerations, led him to think that this part of Lord Wellesley's policy should not be carried further. The following cogent remarks on the subject are contained in a letter addressed to the Governor-General before the commencement of the war:—

There are many objections to the employment of a subsidiary force. It has a natural tendency to render the government of every country in which it exists, weak and oppressive, to extinguish all honourable spirit among the higher classes of society, and to degrade and impoverish the whole people. The usual remedy of a bad government in India is a quiet revolution in the palace, or a violent one by rebellion or foreign conquests. But the presence of a British force cuts off every chance of remedy, by supporting the prince on the throne against every foreign and domestic enemy. It renders him indolent by teaching him to trust to strangers for his security, and cruel and avaricious by showing him that he has nothing to fear from the hatred of his subjects. Wherever the subsidiary system is introduced,

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. p. 41.

unless the reigning prince be a man of great abilities, the country will soon bear the marks of it in decaying villages and decreasing populations. This has long been observed in the dominions of the Peshwa and the Nizam, and is now beginning to be seen in Mysore. The talents of Purneah, while he acted as Diwán, saved that country from the usual effects of the system, but the Rájá is likely to let them have their full operation. He is indolent and prodigal, and has, besides the current revenue, dissipated about sixty lakhs of pagodas of the treasure laid up by the late Diwán. He is mean, artful, revengeful, and cruel. He does not take away life, but he inflicts the most disgraceful and inhuman punishments on men of every rank, at a distance from his capital, where he thinks it will remain unknown to Europeans, and, though young, he is already detested by his subjects.

A subsidiary force would be a most useful establishment, if it could be directed solely to the support of our ascendency, without nourishing all the vices of a bad government; but this seems to be almost impossible. The only way in which this object has ever in any degree been attained, is by the appointment of a Diwán. This measure is no doubt liable to numerous objections; but it is still the only one by which any amends can be made to the people of the country for the miseries brought upon them by the subsidiary force in giving stability to a vicious government. The great difficulty is to prevent the prince from counteracting the Diwán, and the Resident from meddling too much; but where this is avoided, the Diwán may be made a most useful instrument of government.

There is, however, another view under which the subsidiary system should be considered—I mean that of its inevitable tendency to bring every native state into which it is introduced, sooner or later, under the exclusive dominion of the British Government. It has already done this completely in the case of the Nawáb of the Carnatic. It has made some progress in that of the Peshwa and the Nizam, and the whole of the territory of these princes will unquestionably suffer the same fate as the Carnatic. The observation of Moro Dekshat, in speaking of the late treaty to Major Ford, that 'no native 'Power could, from its habits, conduct itself with such strict 'fidelity as we seemed to demand,'' is perfectly just. This very Peshwa will probably again commit a breach of the

alliance. The Nizam will do the same, and the same consequences, a further restriction of their power for our own safety, must again follow. Even if the prince were himself disposed to adhere rigidly to the alliance, there will always be some amongst his principal officers who will urge him to break it. As long as there remains in the country any high-minded independence which seeks to throw off the control of strangers, such counsellors will be found. I have a better opinion of the natives of India than to think that this spirit will soon be completely extinguished, and I can therefore have no doubt that the subsidiary system must everywhere run its full course and destroy every government which it undertakes to protect.

In this progress of things, the evil of a weak and oppressive government, supported by a subsidiary alliance, will at least be removed; but even if all India could be brought under the British dominion, it is very questionable whether such a change, either as regards the natives or ourselves, ought to be desired. One effect of such a conquest would be that the Indian army, having no longer any warlike neighbours to combat, would gradually lose its military habits and discipline, and that the native troops would have leisure to feel their own strength, and, for want of other employment, to turn it against their European masters. But even if we could be secured against every internal convulsion, and could retain the country quietly in subjection, I doubt much if the condition of the people would be better than under their native princes. The strength of the British Government enables it to put down every rebellion, to repel every foreign invasion, and to give to its subjects a degree of protection which those of no native Power enjoy. Its laws and institutions also afford them a security from domestic oppression unknown in those States; but these advantages are dearly bought. They are purchased by the sacrifice of independence, of national character, and of whatever renders a people respectable.* The natives of the British provinces may without fear pursue their different occupations as traders, mirásidárs, or husbandmen, and enjoy the fruits of their labours in tranquillity; but

* In these remarks Munro seems hardly to have attached sufficient weight to the fact that for many centuries, in most parts of India, the great mass of the population had been subjected to the rule of foreigners, in many cases to that of several foreign dynasties in succession.

none of them can look forward to any share in the legislation or civil or military government of their country. It is from men who either hold or are eligible to public office that natives take their character: where no such men exist, there can be no energy in any other class of the community. The effect of this state of things is observable in all the British provinces, whose inhabitants are certainly the most abject race in India. No elevation of character can be expected among men who in the military line cannot attain to any rank above that of subahdár, where they are as much below an ensign as an ensign is below the Commander-in-Chief, and who in the civil line can hope for nothing beyond some petty judicial or revenue office, in which they may by corrupt means make up for their slender salary.

If the British Government is not favourable to the improvement of the Indian character, its control through a subsidiary force is still less so. Its power is now so great that it has nothing to fear from any combination, and it is perfectly able to take satisfaction for any insult, without any extension of the subsidiary system being necessary. It will generally be found much more convenient to carry on war where it has not been introduced. This was the case in both the wars with Tippoo Sultan. The conquest was complete, because our operations were not perplexed by any subsidiary alliance with him. The simple and direct mode of conquest from without is more creditable, both to our armies and to our national character, than that of dismemberment from within by the aid of a subsidiary force. However just the motives may be from which such a force acts, yet the situation in which it is placed, renders its acting at all too like the movement of the Prætorian bands. It acts, it is true, only by the orders of its own Government, and only for public objects; but still it is always ready in the neighbourhood of the capital to dictate terms to, or to depose, the prince whom it was stationed there to defend.*

We have said that Munro was compelled, by the state of his health, to relinquish his appointments, both civil and military, in the Southern Mahratta

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. pp. 7–10.

country. Although his general health was good, the heavy work he had gone through, coupled with exposure to the sun, had so much impaired his eyesight that rest from all work for a time was considered essential. He returned to Madras in the autumn of 1818 for the purpose of at once returning to England, but, owing to the difficulty of obtaining a passage in a suitable vessel, was detained until the 24th of January, 1819, when he and Mrs. Munro embarked, and touching at Ceylon and at St. Helena, reached England towards the end of June. Their eldest son, the present Sir Thomas Munro, was born on the voyage.

CHAPTER VII.

Munro appointed Governor of Madras—Governors of Indian Presidencies not usually selected from the Indian services—Reasons for Munro's appointment—His feelings on the subject—Banquet given by Court of Directors—Mr. Canning's speech—Munro's arrival at Madras—His relations with his Council—His work—Special questions—Condition of Ceded Districts—Emoluments of revenue and judicial officials—Training of junior civil servants—Employment of natives in the public service—Education of natives—The Indian press—Munro's varied knowledge of Indian business—His habits—His intended retirement—Madras famine of 1824*—Munro's views on famines—War with Burma—Munro's active co-operation with the Governor-General—Recognition of his services in connection with the war—Munro again tenders his resignation—Delay in appointing his successor—His death—Public testimonies borne to his services—Compared with Elphinstone, Malcolm, and Metcalfe.*

MUNRO's stay in England on this occasion was very short. A few weeks after his arrival, he received intimation that he had been nominated Governor of Madras in succession to Mr. Elliot. For many years the custom had been to appoint to the Governor-Generalship and to the Governorship of Madras persons not connected with the Indian services. Since the retirement of Warren Hastings in 1785, Sir John Shore (afterwards Lord Teignmouth) and Sir George Barlow had been the only Governors-General appointed from home who had risen in the Indian service, and in the case of Sir George Barlow the appointment had only been made as a temporary measure, and notwithstanding the strenuous efforts of the Court of Directors to obtain its confirmation

for the usual period, had been cancelled by the ministry after the lapse of a few months. Similarly in Madras, from the date of Lord Macartney's accession to the Government in 1781, with the exception of occasional intervals, when, in pursuance of the Act of 1784, the Senior Member of Council acted as Governor between the departure of one Governor and the arrival of his successor, the only Indian official who had held the office was Sir George Barlow, to whom it was given as some compensation for the loss of the Governor-Generalship. In Bombay more delay had occurred in giving effect to the new policy, Mr. Jonathan Duncan, an eminent Bengal civilian, having held the Governorship from December, 1795, until his death in August, 1811; but his successor, Sir Evan Nepean, was a stranger to India, and the intention was to adopt in future, in regard to Bombay, the policy which had of late years been followed in respect of Bengal and Madras.*

* In the Diary of Lord Ellenborough, which has been lately published, there is the following curious account of a conversation with the Duke of Wellington, at the time Prime Minister, regarding the appointment of a Governor of Bombay:—

'After seeing the Chairs spoke to the 'Duke about the Bombay succession. 'He asked what I meant to do with 'Elphinstone. I considered he had left 'India altogether. The Duke thought 'he must return—that he would go to 'Bombay again, with the expectation 'of afterwards going to Madras. I 'think the Duke has an idea of making 'him Governor-General. I mentioned 'Mr. Chaplin. The Duke mentioned 'Mr. Jenkins, of whom he thought 'highly. He had done well at Nagpore, 'and he had had some correspondence 'with him when in India, which gave 'him a good opinion of him. The Duke 'spoke of Mr. Russell, but thought he 'had been mixed up with the Hyderabad transaction. I then mentioned 'Clare. The Duke thought him better 'than any of the others mentioned—'that it was a great thing to have a 'man of rank; he must be well supported; *he had not a very strong 'mind.* However, on the whole he 'seemed better than the others, and I 'am to propose him. I am very glad 'to have Clare. I have a great respect 'and regard for him—*but I have a little 'hesitation as to his fitness.* He will, 'however, be a most zealous and honourable servant of the public, *and his 'good manners will keep people in good 'humour and in order.*'

Lord Clare is not the only Indian Governor in regard to whose fitness for the office doubts must have been entertained by those who sent him out.

There was much to be said in favour of that policy. The low standard of official morality which prevailed in India a hundred years ago, and the necessary unfitness for offices demanding high administrative capacity, of men whose duties, for the most part, had been of a commercial character, went far to justify the policy of looking beyond the civil servants of the Company for persons qualified to fill the chief places in the several Presidencies. But during the thirty-four years which had elapsed since the passing of Mr. Pitt's India Bill, great changes had taken place. The Government of the Company, engaged at the beginning of that period in a struggle for existence, the issue of which was then uncertain, had succeeded in 1818 in establishing its supremacy throughout the whole of the peninsula. In the course of the war just brought to a close, and during many years preceding it, services of the most conspicuous merit, administrative, political, and military, had been rendered by servants of the Company—services which it was not only just, but eminently politic, to recognize in a special manner. Mr. Canning, who still presided at the Board of Control, discerning the requirements of the situation with that enlightened and liberal statesmanship which marked the whole of his political career, and recognizing the expediency of a temporary departure from the policy of his predecessors, resolved on appointing some of the most distinguished servants of the Company to Indian Governorships as vacancies occurred. Such a vacancy was at the moment impending at Bombay, and Mr. Canning accordingly sent an intimation of his views to the Court of Directors, coupling with it the names of Sir John Malcolm, Mr. Elphinstone, and Colonel Munro. Mr.

Elphinstone was appointed to Bombay, and when, in the following year, the appointment of a successor to Mr. Elliot at Madras was brought under consideration, Munro was selected.

Honourable as the appointment was, and much as it would have gratified Munro some years previously, it was not without reluctance that he decided on accepting it. He was already fifty-eight years of age. He had served in India upwards of thirty-two years, much of that service having been passed in very trying climates, and latterly under circumstances involving great exposure. His duties during the greater part of the time had been most arduous. More than most men he had been used "to scorn delights and live laborious days," and it was not unnatural that he should long for a life of greater leisure, in which he could visit new and interesting scenes, and pass the residue of his days in the society of his family and friends. From an expression in a letter written to his sister in 1815, it would seem that he had contemplated the possibility, though not the probability, of his being promoted to high office. 'There is no situation,' he wrote, 'likely 'to fall to me in this country that I care about. 'There is but one that I think of any consequence, 'and even that in a few years will be indifferent to 'me.' * And when the appointment to which the foregoing remark not improbably referred, had been offered to and accepted by him, he could not help feeling that at his time of life the expatriation which it involved, was not without its drawbacks.

'This country' (he wrote, as he was waiting at Deal to embark) 'is the country of all our relations and of early life,

* Gleig's Life, vol. i. p. 481.

'and of all the associations connected with it. It is also the 'country of all the arts of peace and war, and of all the 'interesting struggles among statesmen for political power, and 'among radicals for the same object. It is near France and 'Italy and all the countries of the Continent, which I have 'earnestly wished to visit ever since I first read about them. 'The only objection I feel to going again to India is my age. 'I might now perhaps find employment in this country, and I 'have health enough to travel over Europe and visit whatever 'is remarkable for having been the scene of great actions in 'ancient times; but when I return from India, it will be too 'late to attempt to enter upon a new career in this country, 'and my eyes will probably be too old, if I am not so in other 'respects, to permit me to derive any pleasure from visiting 'the countries of the Continent.'*

It was with these feelings that Munro embarked for India in the last days of 1819. He had been appointed a Companion of the Bath for his military services in the Mahratta War, and before his departure he was promoted to the rank of Knight Commander. In conformity with the custom obtaining in those days, shortly before he sailed, he was entertained by the Court of Directors at a banquet, at which Mr. Canning gave expression in eloquent terms to the sentiments of general satisfaction with which Munro's appointment was regarded.

We bewilder ourselves (Mr. Canning said) in this part of the world with opinions respecting the sources from which power is derived. Some suppose it to arise with the people themselves, while others entertain a different view. All, however, are agreed that it should be exercised *for* the people. If ever an appointment took place to which this might be ascribed as the distinguishing motive, it was that which we have now come together to celebrate, and I have no doubt that the meritorious officer who has been appointed to the Government of Madras, will in the execution of his duty ever

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. pp. 93, 94.

keep in view those measures which will best conduce to the happiness of twelve millions of people.

Sir Thomas and Lady Munro reached Madras on the 8th of June, 1820, having spent a fortnight on the way at Bombay as the guests of Mr. Elphinstone, with whom Munro wished to discuss various public matters. He took his seat as Governor immediately on landing, and at once entered upon the business of the office. At that time, as now, the Government of Madras consisted of a Governor and three Members of Council, of whom the Commander-in-Chief was one, and the other two were members of the civil service. To a Governor possessing no previous acquaintance with Indian administration, the Council is a valuable and necessary aid; but in the case of a man of Munro's antecedents, such assistance was certainly not necessary, and it would not have been surprising if in the earlier period of his government he had found himself somewhat embarrassed by the opposition of his colleagues; for on some of the most burning questions of the day his policy was but little in accord with the views hitherto maintained in the Council, and only a few years had elapsed since his functions on the judicial Commission had been for a time paralyzed by the opposition which they encountered. But it does not appear that from the time of his assumption of the Governorship, Munro experienced any difficulty in his relations with his Council. It is not improbable that his path was smoothed to some extent by the support which his views had already received from the Home Government; but, making every allowance for this consideration, much must be attributed to the fact that Munro possessed in an eminent degree those qualities

of earnestness, patience, and toleration for the opinions of others, which go so far to disarm opposition. There never was a more constitutional Governor than Munro. The law having provided that he should discharge the duties of his high office in conjunction with a Council, he acted up to its provisions in the spirit as well as in the letter, treating his colleagues with invariable confidence and unreserve; and thus it came to pass that while there never was an Indian Government in which there was less friction between the Governor and the Council, there never was a Government which was more essentially the Government of the Governor, than the Madras Government was while Munro presided over it.

The unceasing work which had been Munro's lot in the more subordinate employments hitherto filled by him, was not destined to be materially diminished in his new office. The Governor had less of the drudgery of detail than the district officer. Questions came before him more fully prepared. As a general rule his duty was rather to decide on facts ascertained by the investigations of others than to go through the laborious task of investigating. But if the quality of the work was different, the quantity was much the same. The ordinary business was heavy. Before Munro had been many weeks in office, he found that not only was his time occupied by the necessary business of administration, but that much of it was taken up "in reading masses of papers and useless altercation between different departments." He wrote:

These require all my patience and a great deal more, for I have very little left. Nothing is so tiresome as to waste

time in discussions of matters of no importance in themselves, but which derive some from the absurd heat of the combatants.

The remark made by an English statesman, which is quoted in Sir John Kaye's "Life of Lord Metcalfe," that "eloquence in India evaporates in scores of paragraphs," was only an epigrammatic description of the fact with which the new Governor found himself confronted. He wrote to Mr. Canning:

By not coming to India you have escaped the irksome task of toiling daily through heaps of heavy long-drawn papers. I never had a very high opinion of our records; but it was not until my last return that I knew that they contained such a mass of useless trash. Every man writes as much as he can, and quotes Montesquieu and Hume and Adam Smith, and speaks as if we were living in a country where people were free and governed themselves.

But besides the current work there were questions of special importance which pressed for settlement when Munro arrived at Madras, and chief among these was the condition of some of the districts, and especially of his old charge, the Ceded Districts, which had suffered grievously from the revenue experiments to which they had been subjected. The abolition of the ryotwár system, and the substitution for it of village leases to renters without any reduction in the assessment, had been very disastrous. Most of the renters had failed; the ryots were impoverished and the villages thrown back on the Government. In the Raidrúg táluq of the Ballári district most of the ryots had emigrated. The state of many of the other districts was no better. Most of the head men were reduced

to poverty. Many of them had been sent to jail. The substantial ryots, whose stock supported the agriculture of the villages, were gone.* An immediate reduction of the assessment, which, indeed, had been recommended by Munro before he left the Ceded Districts in 1807, was necessary, with full liberty to the ryots to increase or diminish their cultivation, and these measures Munro and his Council ordered in anticipation of the sanction of the Court of Directors. But the issue of orders is one thing: their execution is another; and before the reforms directed by Munro could be brought into operation in such a manner as to effect their object, he had to remove two Collectors, of whom one by his obstinacy, and the other by his indolence, had practically defeated the intentions of the Government. In dealing with this matter, as with many others, Munro acted on the principle of seeing for himself, by visiting the districts concerned and ascertaining their condition on the spot. His thorough knowledge of Indian district administration and his command of the native languages were, of course, enormous advantages, and added greatly to the value of the tours through the country which he made frequently. On these occasions he invariably travelled by short stages, just as he had done as a Collector, though necessarily with a larger camp, making himself thoroughly accessible to the people. He usually took with him one of the Secretaries to Government and a Member of the Board of Revenue acquainted with the districts through which he was to pass, and at the end of his tour he embodied the results of his observations in a Minute, which was

* Minutes, vol. i. p. 111.

laid before the Council and formed the basis of the orders subsequently issued.

Two other matters, closely connected with each other, which engaged Munro's early attention, were the disparity of the emoluments in the two great departments of the internal administration, the revenue and judicial departments, and the training of the junior civil servants. Under the arrangements made some years previously, the salaries of the revenue officials had been fixed on a scale far below that assigned to the judicial officers, and not only were the judicial salaries higher than the revenue salaries, but the number of well-paid appointments in the former department considerably exceeded the number of those in the latter. The necessary result was that the ablest men in the service were attracted to the judicial branch and every Collector aspired to promotion as a Judge. This state of things Munro regarded as extremely mischievous, attaching, as he did, great importance to the office of Collector.

Nothing is so expensive as inexperienced Collectors. Much more than the amount of their allowances is lost every year in revenue from their mismanagement, and when the affairs of their districts have in consequence fallen into disorder, we are obliged to submit to the additional expense of a commission to inquire into the causes of it. We must, under every system, expect to have some bad servants, but when the system itself is bad, we can expect to have but few that are good.

We should form a very erroneous judgment of the important office of Collector, if we supposed that it was limited merely to revenue matters, instead of extending to everything affecting the welfare of the people. In India, whoever regulates the assessment of the land-rent, holds in his hand the mainspring of the peace of the country. An equal and

moderate assessment has more effect in preventing litigation and crimes, than all our civil and criminal regulations. When the lands are accurately surveyed and registered, the numerous suits which occur where this is not the case, regarding their boundaries and possession, are prevented, and when the assessment is moderate, every man finds employment, and the thefts and robberies which are committed, in consequence of the want of it and of other means of subsistence, almost entirely cease. When the people are contented, those incorrigible offenders who live as banditti and make robbery a trade, find no protection or encouragement, and are all gradually taken or expelled from the country.*

On the question of the proper training of the junior civil servants Munro held very decided opinions. He deemed it essential that every civil servant should pass the earlier years of his service in the revenue line. His reasons cannot be better expressed than in his own words:

We have now in our widely extended territory an ample field for the training of the junior servants in revenue affairs, and we ought to avail ourselves of it for that purpose. A knowledge of revenue will be useful in whatever department they may be afterwards employed; but a knowledge of the natives is still more essential, and this knowledge is only to be acquired by an early and free intercourse with them, for which the revenue presents infinitely more facilities than any other line.

It ought to be our aim to give to the younger servants the best opinion of the natives, in order that they may be better qualified to govern them hereafter. We can never be qualified to govern men against whom we are prejudiced. If we entertain a prejudice at all, it ought rather to be in their favour than against them. We ought to know their character, but especially the favourable side of it; for if we know only the unfavourable, it will beget contempt and harshness on the one part and discontent on the other. The

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 261, 262.

custom of appointing young men, as soon as they leave college, to be Registrars to Zillah Courts is calculated rather to produce than to obviate this evil. . . . There are some men who overcome all difficulties, and become valuable public officers, in whatever line they are placed, and whatever may have been that in which they are first employed; but in making rules we must look to men such as they generally are. When a young man is transferred from college to the office of Zillah Registrar, he finds himself all at once invested with judicial functions. He learns forms before he learns things. He becomes full of the respect due to the court, but knows nothing of the people. He is placed too high above them to have any general intercourse with them. He has little opportunity of seeing them except in court. He sees only the worst part of them, and under the worst shapes. He sees them as plaintiff and defendant, exasperated against each other, or as criminals; and the unfavourable opinion with which he too often at first enters among them, in place of being removed by experience, is every day strengthened and increased. He acquires, it is true, habits of cautious examination, and of precision and regularity; but they are limited to a particular object, and are frequently attended with dilatoriness, too little regard for the value of time, and an inaptitude for general affairs which require a man to pass readily from one subject to another.

In the revenue line he has an almost boundless field, from whence he may draw at pleasure his knowledge of the people. As he has it in his power at some time or other to show kindness to them all in settling their differences, in occasional indulgence in their rents, in facilitating the performance of their ceremonies, and many other ways; and as he sees them without official forms or restraint, they come to him freely, not only on the public, but often on their private concerns. His communications with them are not limited to one object, but extend to everything connected with the welfare of the country. He sees them engaged in the pursuits of trade and agriculture, and promoting by their labours the increase of its resources,—the object to which his own are directed. He sees that among them there is, as in other nations, a mixture of good and bad; that, though many are selfish, many likewise, especially among the agricultural

class, are liberal and friendly to their poorer neighbours; and he gradually learns to take an interest in their welfare, which adheres to him in every future situation.

If a young man be sent at once from college to the revenue line, the usual effect will be to render him attached to the natives; if to the judicial, to increase the dislike towards them with which he too often sets out. The main object, therefore, in beginning with the revenue, is not to teach him to collect the kists, which is a very secondary consideration, but to afford him an opportunity of gaining a knowledge of the inhabitants and their usages, which is indispensable to the due discharge of his duty in the judicial, as well as in the revenue line. An acquaintance with the customs of the inhabitants, but particularly of the ryots, the various tenures under which they hold their lands, the agreements usual among them regarding cultivation, and between them and soukárs respecting loans or advances for their rents, and the different modes of assessment, is essential to a Judge; for questions concerning these points form the chief part of his business. A Judge who is ignorant of them, must often be at a loss on the most simple points; but as a knowledge of them can hardly be attained excepting in the revenue, it may be said that no man can be a good Judge who has not served in it. If this kind of knowledge be indispensable in a Zillah Judge, it is equally so in the Judges of the higher courts and the Secretaries to Government. It is on the right administration of the revenue that the prosperity of the country chiefly depends. If it be too heavy, or very unequally distributed, the effects are felt in every department. Trade is depressed as well as agriculture. Numbers of the lower orders of people are driven by necessity to seek a subsistence in theft and robbery. The better sort become dissatisfied, and give no help in checking the disorder. The roads become unsafe and the prisons crowded; and we impute to the depravity of the people the mischief which has probably been occasioned by injudicious taxation, or the hasty abolition or resumption of long-established rights and privileges. It is of importance that the higher officers of Government should always be able to trace the good or bad state of the country to its true cause, and that, with this view, they should in the early part of their service be employed in the revenue

line in the provinces, because it is only there that they can completely see and understand its internal structure and administration.*

The observations embodied in the foregoing extracts may now appear to be trite expressions of long-established truths; but those truths, which in these days are regarded as axioms of Indian administration, were by no means so considered sixty years ago, and to Munro the credit is due of having first put them forward in such a form as to command the assent of wise and thoughtful men.

Munro had long been impressed with the necessity of more largely utilizing native agency, and of abandoning the policy then in vogue of excluding the natives of India from all situations of trust or emolument.

Writing to Mr. Canning about a year after his arrival at Madras, he said:

Our present system of government by excluding all natives from power and trust and emolument is much more efficacious in depressing, than all our laws and school-books can do in elevating, their character. We are working against our own designs, and we can expect to make no progress while we work with a feeble instrument to improve and a powerful one to deteriorate. The improvement of the character of a people, and the keeping them at the same time in the lowest state of dependence on foreign rulers to which they can be reduced by conquest, are matters quite incompatible with each other.

There can be no hope of any great zeal for improvement, when the highest acquirements can lead to nothing beyond some petty office, and can confer neither wealth nor honour. While the prospects of the natives are so bounded, every project for bettering their characters must fail, and no such projects can have the smallest chance of success unless some of those objects are placed within their reach, for the sake of

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 248–250.

which men are urged to exertion in other countries. This work of improvement, in whatever way it may be attempted, must be very slow, but it will be in proportion to the degree of confidence which we repose in them, and to the share which we give them in the administration of public affairs. All that we can give them without endangering our own ascendency, should be given. All real military power must be kept in our own hands; but they might with advantage hereafter be made eligible to every civil office under that of a member of the Government. The change should be gradual, because they are not yet fit to discharge properly the duties of high civil employment according to our rules and ideas, but the sphere of their employment should be extended in proportion as we find that they become capable of filling properly higher situations.

We shall never have much accurate knowledge of the resources of the country or of the causes by which they are raised or depressed; we shall always assess it very unequally, and often too high, until we learn to treat the higher classes of natives as gentlemen, and to make them assist us accordingly in doing what is done by the House of Commons in England in estimating and apportioning the amount of taxation.*

Three years later, in an important Minute on the state of the country and condition of the people,† Munro wrote on this subject more at length:

With what grace can we talk of our paternal government, if we exclude the natives from every important office, and say, as we did till very lately, that in a country containing fifteen millions of inhabitants, no man but a European shall be entrusted with so much authority as to order the punishment of a single stroke of a rattan. Such an interference is to pass a sentence of degradation on a whole people, for which no

* Gleig's Life, vol. ii. pp. 186, 187.

† This Minute is dated 31st December, 1824. It is a comprehensive paper, dealing with questions of land revenue and tenures, as well as with the question of the employment and advancement of natives in the public service. In the present collection the two parts of the Minute appear in separate sections of the collection: the first part in the Revenue, and the second in the Miscellaneous section.

benefit can ever compensate. There is no instance in the world of so humiliating a sentence having ever been passed upon any nation. The weak and mistaken humanity which is the motive of it, can never be viewed by the natives as any just excuse for the disgrace inflicted on them by being pronounced to be unworthy of trust in deciding on the petty offences of their countrymen. We profess to seek their improvement, but propose means the most adverse to success. The advocates of improvement do not seem to have perceived the great springs on which it depends: they propose to place no confidence in the natives, to give them no authority, and to exclude them from office as much as possible; but they are ardent in their zeal for enlightening them by the general diffusion of knowledge.

No conceit more wild and absurd than this was ever engendered in the darkest ages; for what is, in every age and every country, the great stimulus to the pursuit of knowledge, but the prospect of fame, or wealth, or power? or what is even the use of great attainments, if they are not to be devoted to their noblest purpose, the service of the community, by employing those who possess them, according to their respective qualifications, in the various duties of the public administration of the country. How can we expect that the Hindus will be eager in the pursuit of science, unless they have the same inducement as in other countries? If superior acquirements do not open the road to distinction, it is idle to suppose that the Hindu would lose his time in seeking them; and even if he did so, his proficiency, under the doctrine of exclusion from office, would serve no other purpose than to show him more clearly the fallen state of himself and his countrymen. He would not study what he knew would be of no ultimate benefit to himself: he would learn only those things which were in demand and which were likely to be useful to him, namely, writing and accounts. There might be some exceptions, but they would be few. Some few natives living at the principal settlements and passing much of their time among Europeans, might, either from a real love of literature, from vanity, or some other cause, study their books; and if they made some progress, it would be greatly exaggerated, and would be hailed as the dawn of the great day of light and science about to be spread all over India. But there always has been, and

always will be, a few such men among the natives, without making any change in the body of the people. Our books alone will do little or nothing: dry simple literature will never improve the character of a nation. To produce this effect, it must open the road to wealth, and honour, and public employment. Without the prospect of such reward, no attainments in science will ever raise the character of the people.

This is true of every nation, as well as of India. It is true of our own. Let Britain be subjugated by a foreign power to-morrow; let the people be excluded from all share in the Government, from public honours, from every office of high trust and emolument, and let them in every situation be considered as unworthy of trust, and all their knowledge and all their literature, sacred and profane, would not save them from becoming, in another generation or two, a low-minded, deceitful, and dishonest race.*

Munro's views on this subject were much in advance of the times in which he lived, and it cannot be said that even now the duty of admitting the natives of India to their fair share in the government of their country is recognized as generally or as fully as it ought to be. In 1870 an Act of Parliament was passed with the avowed object of providing additional facilities for the employment of natives of proved merit and ability in higher posts than those previously open to them; but, owing to one cause or another, the passing of the rules which were necessary to bring the Act into operation, was delayed for upwards of eight years, and even then the rules were so framed as rather to afford encouragement to the rising generation of native officials, than to fulfil the just expectations of men who, in a long course of service, have proved their merit and their ability to discharge the duties of offices considerably higher than those hitherto open to them. Munro's language

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 321, 322.

as to the impolicy of the system of exclusion which he was denouncing, is strong; but we may be certain that it would have been still stronger if he could have foreseen that upwards of fifty years after he had expressed the opinions embodied in the foregoing extracts, not only would no native have held a seat in the Board of Revenue, or in any analogous office in any of the Presidencies, but the prospect of such an appointment being made would still, to all appearances, be as distant as ever.

Munro attached little value to schemes for improving the education of natives unless *pari passu* steps were taken for extending to them a greater share in the honours and emoluments of office. His view was that the two things, improved education and higher employment, should go together. Subject to this proviso, he fully recognized the obligation which lay upon the British Government in India to educate the people under its rule. In his opinion, whatever expense the Government might incur in the education of the people would be amply repaid by the improvement of the country; for the 'diffusion of knowledge is inseparably followed by more 'orderly habits, by increasing industry, by a taste 'for the comforts of life, by exertion to acquire them, 'and by the growing prosperity of the people.' It must at the same time be admitted that while entertaining these sentiments, Munro failed to appreciate with his usual discernment the nature of the task which any such measure involved. The funds available were extremely limited, not exceeding Rs. 50,000 (£5000) a year—a mere drop in the ocean in comparison with what was required to meet the cost even of commencing anything approaching a com-

plete scheme of public instruction; and this small sum, which might have done something if it had been applied to the establishment of a few schools of a comparatively high order under well-educated English teachers, was frittered away in establishing one central school for training teachers, which was organized upon too cheap a plan to command the sort of agency that was required, and in attempting to establish some four hundred schools of a very elementary character, most of which were little, if at all, superior to the ordinary village schools of the country. The measure was essentially faulty in its design, and its failure was inevitable. It is one of the few failures which have to be recorded against Munro. It was reserved for one of his successors, Lord Elphinstone, some fifteen years later, to give a fresh start to education in Madras, by establishing a school which, imparting a superior education, not only served as a nucleus of a comprehensive system of national education, but gave to that Presidency, in the course of a few years, a small but influential body of highly educated native officials, who have done much to justify Munro's views as to the policy of giving to the natives of India a more important share in the government of their country.

Another question which about this time excited a good deal of discussion in India, was the question of the public press. In those days there was no native press in India. In Bengal the English press was subject to restrictions which varied in their stringency according to the disposition of the head of the Government for the time being. Under Lord Wellesley and his immediate successors, the re-

strictions were extremely severe, and any editor who made attacks in his paper upon the Government or its officers, or upon the religion of the natives, was liable to be deported from India. Lord Hastings allowed the press very considerable latitude; but Mr. Adam, who succeeded him in the Governor-Generalship pending the arrival of Lord Amherst, regarded the press as a dangerous instrument, and deported Mr. James Silk Buckingham, one of the Calcutta editors, for an infringement of the press regulations. At Madras there had always been a rigid censorship of the press, and no paper could be issued until it had been submitted for the inspection of the Government censor. Munro held very strongly the opinion that the restrictions upon the press ought not to be removed, and as the subject was exciting a good deal of attention, both in England and in India, shortly after he assumed the Government of Madras, he recorded his views upon it in a comprehensive Minute for the consideration of the Governor-General, and of the Court of Directors. The key-note of Munro's policy on this subject is contained in one of the first sentences of the Minute, in which he states that he 'cannot view the question of a free press' in India 'without feeling that the 'tenure with which we hold our power, never has 'been and never can be the liberties of the people.' He wrote:

Those who speak of the press being free in this country, have looked only at one part of the subject. They have looked no farther than to Englishmen, and to the press as a monopoly in their hands for the amusement or benefit of their countrymen. They have not looked to its freedom among the natives, to be by them employed for whatever they

may also consider to be for their own benefit and for that of their countrymen. A free press and the dominion of strangers are things which are quite incompatible, and which cannot long exist together. For what is the first duty of a free press? It is to deliver the country from a foreign yoke, and to sacrifice to this one great object every meaner consideration; and if we make the press really free to the natives as well as to Europeans, it must inevitably yield to this result.*

Again:

The advocates of a free press seek, they say, the improvement of our system of Indian government, and of the minds and the condition of the natives; but these desirable ends are, I am convinced, quite unattainable by the means they propose. There are two important points which should always be kept in view in our administration of affairs here. The first is, that our sovereignty should be prolonged to the remotest possible period; the second is, that whenever we are obliged to resign it, we should leave the natives so far improved from their connection with us as to be capable of maintaining a free, or at least a regular government, among themselves. If these objects can ever be accomplished, it can only be under a restricted press. A free one, so far from facilitating, would render this attainment utterly impracticable; for by attempting to precipitate improvement it would frustrate all the benefits which might have been derived from a more cautious and temperate proceeding.†

His chief ground of apprehension was the possible effect of a free press upon the native army. He wrote:

If we, for the sole benefit of a few European editors of newspapers, permit a licentious press to undermine among the natives all respect for the European character and authority, we shall scatter the seeds of discontent among our native troops, and never be secure from insurrection. It is not necessary for this purpose that they should be more intelligent than they are at present, or should have acquired

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 287, 288. † Ibid., p. 288.

any knowledge of the rights of men or nations. All that is necessary is that they should have lost their present high respect for their officers and the European character; and, whenever this happens, they will rise against us, not for the sake of obtaining the liberty of their country, but of obtaining power and plunder. We are trying an experiment never yet tried in the world,—maintaining a foreign dominion by means of a native army, and teaching that army, through a free press, that they ought to expel us and deliver their country. As far as Europeans only, whether in or out of the service, are concerned, the freedom or restriction of the press could do little good or harm, and would hardly deserve any serious attention. It is only as regards the natives that the press can be viewed with apprehension, and it is only when it comes to agitate our native army that its terrible effects will be felt. Many people, both in this country and in England, will probably go on admiring the efforts of the Indian press, and fondly anticipating the rapid extension of knowledge among the natives, while a tremendous revolution, originating in this very press, is preparing, which will, by the premature and violent overthrow of our power, disappoint all these hopes, and throw India back into a state more hopeless of improvement than when we first found her.*

The whole of the Minute from which the foregoing passages have been extracted, is well worth perusal, as containing the ablest statement that has been put forward of the views of those who at different times have considered the freedom of the Indian press, European as well as native, to be a source of danger to the State. There are many persons who hold that the apprehensions expressed by Munro as to the effects of a free press upon the fidelity of the native army have been borne out by the events of 1857. To them Munro's language appears in the light of fulfilled prophecy; †

* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 294.

† Mr. Elphinstone, who was still living when the Indian Mutiny occurred, took this view. The following is an extract from a letter written by him at that time:—'The last accounts

but it is extremely doubtful whether the writings of the public press, European or native, had anything to do with the Mutiny. The preponderance of opinion is certainly opposed to this theory. And as to the restrictions which were imposed upon the English press in the earlier years of British rule in India, the truth seems to be that it would have been as impossible to maintain those restrictions permanently, as it was to maintain the Company's monopoly of the trade, or the interdict against the free settlement of unofficial Englishmen in the country. Anomalous as our position in India is, and true as it may be that the tenure with which we hold it 'never has been and never can be the 'liberties of the people,' it is now tolerably clear that the English nation would not have been induced to tolerate, except upon the strongest ground of proved necessity, a permanent withholding of the liberty of the press from their countrymen in India. That press, from the necessity of the case, both as regards its ability and its tone, is inferior to the press of the mother country. Its criticism is sometimes unfair, and in its attacks there is not unfrequently an amount of personal rancour which seldom disfigures the writings of English journalists in this country. But it is never disloyal. Its attacks are directed against individual men or measures, treating them as accidental blots upon our system, and not as the types or necessary results of British rule. And notwithstanding its faults and imperfections, it cannot be denied that the English press in India

'from India are doubtless very gloomy. 'The risk of fresh interests and new 'feelings arising during the interval of 'inaction is certainly very great, and 'to one who has just read Munro's 'admirable Minute, it appears that 'the full accomplishment of his pro-'phecy is at hand.'

has been on the whole a valuable aid to the Government, subjecting its measures to criticism which is often just and well informed, and bringing to light abuses and irregularities which might otherwise escape notice. The *Friend of India* under Marshman and Townsend, the *Madras Athenæum* under John Bruce Norton, and other Anglo-Indian newspapers in more recent times have rendered valuable services to the State, as have some of the best of the native papers, such as the *Hindu Patriot*, and one or two others conducted by educated natives and published in the English language. As regards the vernacular papers the case is different. The native press is a thing of very modern growth, and in the case of several of the newspapers published in the vernacular languages, liberty had so degenerated into licence, and the practice of seditious writing, of writing tending to bring the Government and its European officers into contempt and to excite antagonism between the people and the governing race, had increased to such an extent, that three years ago it was found necessary to impose restrictions upon the vernacular press. To this section of the press Munro's remarks are strictly applicable.

But the discussion of questions of the nature of those referred to in the preceding pages, applying not to the circumstances of any particular Presidency or province, but to the principles of Indian government, which, whether right or wrong, are necessarily general in their application, did not form by any means the chief occupation of Munro's official life. His main employment was the constant superintendence of the machinery of administration and the decision of questions daily arising in the several public

departments. There never was a Governor who went more thoroughly into the business that came before him. On every question of any sort of importance he recorded his opinion so fully, that his note or Minute served, with but little addition or alteration, as the text of the letter or order disposing of the case. His varied knowledge of the details of business in nearly every department of the State, combined as it was with a masterly grasp of general principles, rendered Munro comparatively independent of the aid of experts. Equally at home on a question connected with the management of military bazars, or with the disposition of the troops, or with the organization of any particular branch of the army, as with the principles and details of a revenue settlement or the judicial requirements of a district, he brought to bear upon the discharge of his duties an amount of practical and varied experience such as no other Indian Governor has possessed.

His labour was incessant. Writing to a correspondent in England, he said, 'I am like an over-'worked horse and require a little rest. Ever since 'I came to this Government almost every paper of 'any importance has been written by myself.' In getting through the vast quantities of work which he accomplished in this as well as in former periods of his official life, he was greatly aided by the regularity of his habits. He was an early riser, and was singularly methodical in the employment of his time.

When Munro accepted the Government, he had not intended to remain in India more than three years, and at the end of his third year of office,

there being at that time, so far as he was aware, no public business of any importance, and nothing in the political outlook which seemed to require that he should prolong his stay, he sent an application to the Court of Directors to be relieved. But while this application was on its way, events were taking place which entirely altered the aspect of affairs. The failure of the usual rains in a great part of the Madras Presidency brought on a scarcity, amounting in some places to famine, which caused serious apprehension; while on the eastern frontier of Bengal complications arose, resulting in a war with Burma, in which the greater part of the troops had to be supplied from Madras. In these circumstances Munro deemed it his duty to intimate to the Home authorities that he was prepared to remain at his post, if his retention of it was considered advisable. The offer was readily accepted, and Munro's departure was indefinitely postponed.

The famine of 1824 was not the only calamity of that nature with which Munro had been called upon to deal. During the seven years that he served in the Ceded Districts there were four years of scarcity. In the first two of those years, 1803 and 1804, the failure of the crops affected the districts under Munro's charge. In 1806 and 1807 it was principally felt in the Carnatic; but in both cases prices in the Ceded Districts rose very considerably, with the inevitable result of serious distress to the poorer classes. Even at this early period Munro's views as to the proper course to be taken by the Government in dealing with famines differed but little from those which are now generally accepted. The only suggestion made by him which in these days would be

regarded as heterodox, but which as recently as 1874 was urged by Sir George Campbell in connection with the famine in Behár, was that under certain circumstances the exportation of grain should be prohibited; but even on this point there are expressions in his reports which show that Munro was sensible of the objections to the measure. He wrote:

> Such a measure ought not to be adopted without the strongest necessity, because it hinders the farmers from making up for the loss of almost the whole of their crop by the high price of the remainder.*

Writing in 1807 on the various means of mitigating a scarcity of food, he said:

> The distress attending an unfavourable season may be mitigated by encouraging importation, prohibiting exportation, reducing the rents of the lower classes of ryots, and by giving employment to the poor on public works. Besides these, there is perhaps no other way in which Government can interfere with any advantage; but of all these means importation is by far the most effectual for promoting the attainment of the objects in view; for if the stock of grain in the country is supposed to be inadequate to the maintenance of the inhabitants until the next harvest, it is only by importation that it can be augmented and made to last till that period; or if the stock of grain, though equal to the subsistence of the inhabitants, be so dear as to place it beyond the reach of the lower orders, it is still only by importation that the price can be so far reduced as to enable them to purchase food. If importation could be carried to such an extent as to keep the price at a moderate rate, it would be unnecessary to take any steps for the assistance of the poor, because they would easily find employment among the other classes of the inhabitants.†

Munro was in favour of employing the poor on public works, 'as near as possible to their own villages, 'both in order to save them from the expense of

* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 222. † Ibid., p. 221.

'a distant journey and from the danger of perishing 'by pestilential disorders, which usually prevail 'wherever a crowd of poor and ill-fed people is drawn 'together from different quarters.' He was much opposed to any system of gratuitous State relief. He wrote :

Were Government to offer to the poor any other relief than the wages of labour, were it to issue grain to them gratis or at a reduced price, it would only have the effect of increasing their number, of drawing them together from all quarters, and of encouraging them to abandon themselves to the protection of the public, and to neglect the salutary means of preserving themselves by their own exertions. In India, as well as in all other countries, the distribution of charity will always be found to increase the number of the poor, which will always at least keep pace with the fund destined for their relief, whatever its amount may be. Were grain, in this country, to be issued to the poor at any particular station, the report would soon reach the remotest corners : the relief to be afforded would be greatly exaggerated : the poor who now procure a livelihood from their labour, would crowd in from all sides in the hopes of procuring it upon easier terms. It would soon become impossible to maintain such a multitude, and famine would appear among them. But this is not the only evil which would attend their being drawn away from their own villages; for the loss of their labour would be felt, and the crops now on the ground, as well as the cultivation of the ensuing season, would suffer from the want of hands.*

In 1807 the Madras Government had so far interfered to facilitate the importation of grain as to guarantee a certain price for all food grains imported, with the result of eventually overstocking the market, and unduly reducing the price of produce in the years immediately following the scarcity. When famine reappeared in 1824, Munro decided to offer a

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 223, 224.

bounty on all grain imported from beyond sea within a fixed period, as being less open to objection than a guaranteed price. He also suspended certain import duties on grain which at that time formed a part of the revenue system.

The war with Burma had been threatening for some years. The ruler and the people of that country were utterly ignorant of the strength of the British Government in India. They had become an aggressive power, and had extended their territories to the borders of Bengal. In 1818 the King of Burma had addressed to the Governor-General an absurd demand for the surrender of Eastern Bengal, including Moorshedabad—a demand which Lord Hastings treated as a forgery and returned to the King. In 1823 matters were brought to a crisis by the Burmese taking possession of a small island called Shahpuri, off the coast of Chittagong, destroying the detachment in charge of it, and refusing to make any reparation for the outrage. War was declared by the Governor-General on the 24th of February, 1824. It was not until the 23rd of that month that the Madras Government received any intimation that war was impending, and that that Presidency would be required to furnish the native branch of the force. In the mean time a disaster had occurred in the Chittagong district at a place called Rámu, where a small detachment which had imprudently been left there in an isolated position, was attacked and put to the sword by the Burmese.

Owing to ignorance of the country on the part of most of the Governor-General's advisers at Calcutta, and to other causes, the strategic management of the war was faulty, and instead of being completed, as it

might have been, in a few months, two years elapsed before the Burmese were reduced to submission; nor would the operations even then have been brought to a close, if it had not been for the indefatigable exertions of Munro in furnishing troops, ships, boats, transport, bullocks, and supplies, taking every precaution and offering every suggestion that could possibly be of use to secure the successful issue of the war. In addition to the numerous official Minutes recorded by him on every one of these subjects as the war went on, Munro kept up a constant correspondence with the Governor-General, placing fully and freely at the disposal of the latter the advice which his long experience of Indian warfare and his knowledge of the Asiatic character enabled him to offer. These Minutes and letters are models of the sort of co-operation which the Governor of an Indian Presidency, possessing local and professional experience, may render to the Governor-General, and it is only due to Lord Amherst to say that the aid thus given was met by him in a spirit of cordial and generous appreciation. While the war was still in progress, Munro was created a baronet, and at its close he received the thanks of the Court of Directors for the 'alacrity, zeal, perseverance, and forecast 'which he so signally manifested throughout the 'course of the late war in contributing all the available resources of the Madras Government towards 'bringing it to a successful termination.' The war resulted in the Burmese being compelled to pay a crore of rupees (one million sterling) as a contribution to the expenses of the war, to cede Arracan, Assam, and Tenasserim, and waive all claims upon Cachár. It was not until after a second war with

Burma, twenty-six years later, that the province of Pegu became British territory.

Some of the opinions which Munro expressed in the course of the correspondence on the subject of the first Burmese war are even now by no means undeserving of attention. We have seen that in his campaign in the Southern Mahratta country he did not scruple to take the field with a force which in other hands would have seemed, and probably would have been, very inadequate to the operations which had to be carried out; but in that case the circumstances were special, and the wonderful success of the campaign was as much due to Munro's extraordinary political influence over the people of the country, as to his strategy. But no general more clearly recognized than Munro did, the danger, as a general rule, of commencing a campaign with an insufficient force.

> It is always dangerous, and often fatal to success, to have a force only barely sufficient to maintain themselves in a hostile country, and none to spare for detachments or distant offensive operations which it may occasionally be found advisable to undertake. It is a great advantage to begin a campaign with a commanding force, particularly in a country recently conquered. It discourages the enemy, and encourages the people of the country to join and aid us, in the hope of regaining their independence. The occupation of Rangoon ought not to make us relax in the smallest degree our preparations, or to believe that it will bring us any nearer to a peace. Our safest and our speediest way of arriving at an honourable peace, is to consider this first success as only the beginning of a general war with the Burman empire, and to engage in it with our whole disposable force.*

He was equally opposed to any relaxation of the preparations for continuing the war when the time

* Minutes, vol. ii. p. 171.

came for entertaining proposals for peace. He held that 'there is no time when it is more essentially 'requisite for an army to be strong than at the very 'moment when its commander is treating for peace.'

The following statement of the objects to be kept in view, and of the best modes of achieving them, is interesting:—

Our chief object in the present war is undoubtedly security from future aggression; our next objects are, peace and the return of our army. There are two ways of preventing future aggression: one is by so completely breaking the power and spirit of the enemy as to deter him from ever renewing hostilities; another is by dismembering or revolutionizing the kingdom of Ava. The means of effecting these objects are in our hands. The power of the enemy may be broken by advancing to the capital, and by showing, not only to the Burmans, but to all the tributary nations, the weakness of the military force of Ava. The kingdom may be partially dismembered by making Assam, Cachár, and all the petty states on the north-east frontier of Bengal, independent of Ava, and by retaining Aracan; and more completely by raising up, if possible, the ancient kingdom of Pegu. Could any enterprising chief of that nation be found to assume the government, he would probably, even without any other aid than some arms, be able to maintain himself against Ava, now broken in force and fallen in character.

If the King of Ava does not seek peace before the loss of his capital, it is not likely that he would hold out long after that event. He would be deserted by his army, if we may judge from all that we have yet seen of its behaviour: he would become dispirited, and would rather offer terms than live as a vagabond. It may be said that he might fly to a distant province, and carry on a long defensive war. But Ava does not seem to be calculated, either from the nature of the country or the character of the people, for this sort of contest. An extensive country and a scanty population are usually great obstacles to invasion, and still more so to conquest; because in such countries there are seldom any

places, the occupation of which can insure the command of the country. To subdue the country, troops must be spread over every part of it; and where the people are hostile, this cannot with safety be done. But Ava, though of very great extent, and very thinly populated in proportion to that extent, is from various causes more easily subjugated than such countries usually are. The population, as far as we have yet seen, are neither warlike nor hostile to us. They appear to have no particular attachment to their rulers, and to be as willing to live under our protection as theirs. The population, though thin, appear to be chiefly concentrated on the banks of the Irrawaddi, where most of their principal towns are. This river, therefore, by running like a high-road through the fertile and populous part of the kingdom, renders it perfectly vulnerable, and enables a superior army to subdue it, because the invader, by having the command of the river, has in fact the command of the country.

I do not, therefore, see much reason to apprehend that the King should attempt to protract the war long after the fall of the capital. I know of only one thing likely to induce him to hold out—the idea that we would not keep the country, but would get tired of the war, and withdraw our forces. Whatever may be intended in this respect, it will be advisable to indicate by our whole conduct a fixed design of keeping our conquests. Nothing would so soon bring the King to terms as the belief that we had such an intention, or so much encourage his holding out as a contrary opinion. The most likely means of impressing this belief would be to appoint a European officer to the charge of the civil government in all the conquered territory, leaving the details in the hands of the natives under his general control; and to collect a revenue according to usage, but much lighter, in order to make it popular. This plan was adopted by Lord Cornwallis in Mysore, and was very useful in procuring supplies of grain and cattle for the army. Such an enemy as we are now engaged with, should always be made to fear the worst. If he thinks that war may terminate in the loss of his crown or of a considerable part of his dominions, he will shun it carefully. But if he thinks that there is a chance of gaining an accession of territory from success, and that there is no danger of losing any permanently from defeat, he has no sufficient motive to deter him from aggression.

If, contrary to expectation, the King should, on the advance of Sir A. Campbell, fly from his capital and refuse to treat, we cannot keep our army in Ava for ever, and must for our own safety endeavour to establish a government that will treat, and enable us to withdraw, and put an end to a war so destructive to our resources. We know from the past history of Ava that revolutions have not been unfrequent there, and that members of the royal family have often attempted to supplant the sovereign. There is every reason to believe that this disposition is not in any degree diminished, and that the Prince of Tarawaddi or some other member of the royal family might with our assistance be encouraged to seize the government. The desertion of the capital, the disgrace attending it, the unpopularity of the King, would all favour the measure. The prince supported by us would be readily acknowledged. He would not have to conquer the country; he would receive possession of it from us, and he would therefore have the strongest motive for seeking the continuance of our friendship.*

As soon as peace was made, Munro renewed his application for permission to resign the government. Meanwhile, owing to the serious illness of their second son, who had been born in 1823, Lady Munro was obliged to return to England before her husband. They parted in March, 1826, hoping to be reunited in the course of the following year, but they never met again. A few months after his wife's departure, Munro set out on a tour through the southern districts of the Presidency, investigating the revenue systems of Tanjore and Tinnevelly, which differed from those in force in the other ryotwár districts, and paying a brief visit to the Nilgiri Hills, then but little known, but now the most agreeable hill station in India. During the previous year, 1825, he had visited Mysore for the purpose of remonstrating with the Rájá, whom Lord Wellesley had placed upon the

* Minutes, vol. ii. pp. 192–194.

throne in 1799, upon his extravagance and misgovernment—a remonstrance which proved ineffectual, and was followed a few years later by the withdrawal from the Rájá of all share in the government of his kingdom. Munro expected to be able to embark for England in the spring of 1827, for his resignation reached the Court of Directors in September, 1826, and it was soon afterwards settled that Mr. Stephen Rumbold Lushington, at that time one of the Political Secretaries to the Treasury, should succeed him; but, owing to causes which have not been fully explained, the formal appointment was delayed until the 4th of April, 1827, and Mr. Lushington did not embark for Madras until July. While awaiting the arrival of his successor, Munro resolved on paying a farewell visit to the Ceded Districts, his interest in which was still unabated. He left Madras for this purpose towards the end of May, and had been rather more than a month in the Ballári district when cholera appeared in his camp. On the 6th of July, shortly after reaching Pattikonda, he was attacked by the disease and died on the evening of the same day. He had attained his sixty-sixth year in the previous May, and had been upwards of forty-seven years in the service of the East India Company.

The intelligence of Munro's death was received at Madras, and in every part of the Presidency, with sentiments of the deepest regret. By all classes of the community the event was mourned as a public calamity. By the members of the civil and military services of his own Presidency Munro was regarded as a man who by his great and commanding talents, by the force of his character, by his extraordinary capacity for work, and by the justness and liberality

of his views, had done more than any man in India to raise the reputation of the East India Company's service. By the natives he was venerated as the protector of their rights, familiar with their customs and tolerant of their prejudices, ever ready to redress their grievances, but firm in maintaining order and obedience to the law. On the intelligence of his death reaching Madras, Munro's late colleagues in the Government announced it in the following Gazette extraordinary:—

Madras, Monday, July 9, 1827.

With sentiments of the deepest concern the Government announces the decease of the Honourable Sir Thomas Munro, Baronet, Knight Commander of the Most Honourable Order of the Bath, Governor of the Presidency of Fort St. George. This event occurred at Pattikonda, near Gooty, on the evening of Friday, the 6th instant.

The eminent person whose life has been thus suddenly snatched away, was on the eve of returning to his native country, honoured with signal marks of esteem and approbation from his Sovereign, from the East India Company, which he had served for more than forty-seven years, from every authority with which he had occasion to co-operate, from the public at large, and from private friends. From the earliest period of his service he was remarkable among other men. His sound and vigorous understanding, his transcendent talents, his indefatigable application, his varied stores of knowledge, his attainments as an Oriental scholar, his intimate acquaintance with the habits and feelings of the native soldiers and inhabitants generally; his patience, temper, facility of access and kindness of manner, would have ensured him distinction in any line of employment. These qualities were admirably adapted to the duties which he had to perform in organizing the resources and establishing the tranquillity of those provinces where his latest breath has been drawn, and where he had long been known by the appellation of the *Father* of the People. In the higher stations, civil and military, which he afterwards filled, the

energies of his character never failed to rise superior to the exigencies of public duty. He had been for seven years at the head of the Government under which he first served as a Cadet, and afterwards became the ablest of its revenue officers, and acquired the highest distinction as a military commander. He had raised its character and fame to a higher pitch than it had ever enjoyed before. His own ambition was more than fulfilled, and he appeared to be about to reap in honourable retirement the well-earned rewards of his services and his virtues, when these have received the last stamp of value at the hand of death.

Though sensible how feeble and imperfect must be any hasty tribute to Sir Thomas Munro's merits, yet the Government cannot allow the event which they deplore to be announced to the public without some expression of their sentiments.

The Flag of Fort St. George will be immediately hoisted half-mast high, and continue so till sunset.

Minute guns, sixty-six in number, corresponding with the age of the deceased, will be fired from the ramparts of Fort St. George. Similar marks of respect will be paid to the memory of Sir Thomas Munro at all the principal military stations and posts dependent on this Presidency.

By order of Government,

D. Hill, Chief Secretary.

Shortly after the issue of the foregoing notification, public meetings were held at Madras and in the Ceded Districts, at which it was resolved to erect in honour of Munro's memory a statue at Madras and a choultry, or caravanserai, for the accommodation of travellers at Gooty, where his remains were buried.*

* The body was subsequently removed to Madras and buried in St. Mary's Church, Fort St. George, the Walhalla of the Madras Presidency. Not far from the remains of Munro lie those of Sir Barry Close, adjutant-general of the army at the taking of Seringapatam, and afterwards British Resident at Poona, and of Mr. Josiah Webbe, the able Chief Secretary to the Madras Government in the later years of the last and earlier years of the present century. Sir Samuel Hood, a distinguished naval officer, Sir Henry Ward and Lord Hobart, the two latter Governors of Madras, are also buried there.

At Pattikonda, the place of his death, the recollection of the event was perpetuated by planting a grove of trees and constructing a well with stone steps at the spot where he died.

In estimating Munro's character and career, it is natural to compare him with some of the most distinguished of his contemporaries in the Indian services, and especially with Elphinstone, Malcolm, and Metcalfe. In the greater part of India at the present day these three men are probably better known than Munro, partly because their services have been described in comparatively recent times by the pen of a popular historian and biographer, and in the case of Malcolm and Metcalfe, because much of their work lay in parts of India which now attract far greater interest than those in which Munro was principally employed. Differing greatly in character, all these four men were endowed with remarkable capacity for administration, and all of them were men who, at any time in the world's history, and in any country, would have made their mark. Malcolm's duties took him into a somewhat wider and more varied sphere than those in which the others were employed. There were few important political transactions in India during the first quarter of the present century in which Malcolm did not play a conspicuous part. In Mysore, at Hyderabad, with Lord Lake's army in Hindustan during the second war with the Mahrattas, in the Deccan and Central India during the final struggle with that power, Malcolm rendered services, both diplomatic and military, which entitle him to a high place among the soldiers and statesmen of the time. He was a man of robust and powerful physique,

animated by an enthusiasm which never flagged, genial and generous, but at times somewhat too unreserved on the subject of his services and his claims. Elphinstone and Metcalfe were civilians, but both of them proved their gallantry on more than one well-fought field. Elphinstone rode beside Wellington at Assye, and at the battle of Kirkee displayed military genius which, had he belonged to the army, must have ensured to him distinction as a commander. Metcalfe's gallant bearing at the siege of Deeg, where he took part in the assault as a volunteer, excited the admiration of the whole of Lord Lake's army. His Indian services were hardly less varied than those of Malcolm. When a very young man, he won his spurs as a diplomatist by his coolness, tact, and decision in a difficult mission to the wily and headstrong ruler of the Punjáb, Runjeet Sing; and some years later his exposure of irregularities which were disgracing the British name at Hyderabad, proved that no amount of personal inconvenience or risk could deter him from doing what he regarded as his duty. Of the many able men who have served in the Council of the Governor-General, there never was an abler than Metcalfe. It was with reference to his conduct in that office that Lord William Bentinck wrote the memorable words: 'He never cavilled upon a trifle, 'and he never yielded to me upon a point of importance.' Metcalfe lived to attain a higher rank and a more prominent position than any of his contemporaries in India. His resolute bearing in Canada at a crisis of the gravest difficulty, and his fortitude in retaining his office there, when he was suffering from a fatal and agonizing malady, because he deemed that

the public interests would be injured if he left his post, have never been surpassed in the annals of our colonial administration. But with these high and noble qualities there was mingled a vein of self-consciousness and over-sensitiveness, which were never apparent either in Elphinstone or Munro. The letter which Metcalfe wrote to the Court of Directors, when he was passed over for the Government of Madras, could not have been written by either of those men. Between Elphinstone and Munro there were some strong points of resemblance. Both were essentially single-minded men, occupied with the work they were to do, and caring little for the credit or promotion they might earn. Of the two, Elphinstone was the one who probably most attracted the affection as well as the esteem of those with whom he was brought into contact. With much of Munro's force of character, with a refined and cultivated intellect, he combined a gentleness of disposition and sympathy with others which were inexpressibly attractive; but he appears to have lacked the sustained energy, physical as well as mental, which imparted to Munro his enormous capacity for work, and enabled him to combine so great a mastery of details with a firm grasp of principles. In general society Munro was probably the least popular man of the four. From very early life he was more or less affected with deafness, which at times disabled him from joining in general conversation, and increased an appearance of reserve, in some measure natural to him in his intercourse with strangers; but in the society of his intimate friends, and with all who were brought into direct communication with him on public business, he

showed no lack of geniality, and by such he was regarded, not only with those sentiments of respect which his great talents, his large experience, and his broad and liberal views could not fail to inspire, but with those warmer feelings of affection which are called forth by an unselfish nature.

Reference has already been made to the opposition which some of Munro's measures encountered from the members of the civil service, and to the jealousy which at one time was felt in connection with his employment on duties considered to belong exclusively to them. No public servant ever more completely lived down antagonism and prejudice. During the seven years that he held the Government of Madras, Munro did more than any Governor had ever done to elevate the tone and raise the efficiency of the civil service, and by no body of men was his value more thoroughly appreciated than by the members of that service. When the writer of this Memoir first arrived in India, Munro had been dead upwards of fifteen years; but the memory of his work was still as fresh as if he had died but yesterday, and his name was never referred to save in terms of the greatest veneration and esteem. By the English statesmen of fifty years ago, Munro was regarded as the ablest Indian official of his time. We have seen in what estimation he was held by Mr. Canning and the Duke of Wellington, two men very different in character, by no means of one mind in politics, but cordially agreed in the high estimate which they formed of Munro. Another prominent statesman of that time, the late Lord Ellenborough, a man very unlike both to the Duke and to Canning, an unsuccessful administrator, but a remarkably shrewd

critic, ranked Munro above all his Indian contemporaries. We have before us a letter written only a few years back by a distinguished civil servant who served in India when Munro was Governor of Madras, and who says, 'There were giants in the 'days of the old Coompany Sahib, and amongst 'them Sir Thomas Munro was a head and shoulders 'taller than his brother giants.' We believe there is much truth in the judgment which this homely sentence embodies; but whether this opinion be correct or not, we cannot doubt that among the British statesmen and soldiers of the nineteenth century, there are not many who have rendered more valuable services to their country, few who have done more in the great work of consolidating our British Indian Empire, than Sir Thomas Munro.

Section I.

REVENUE.

THE REVENUE SETTLEMENT OF THE SALEM DISTRICT.

*To Major Read.**

Dharmapúri, 15th November, 1796.

SIR,

I received some time ago your letter of the 4th October, with a copy of 'Regulations for the Management of 'Revenue Affairs,'† and I shall now, as you desire, make my remarks on them, paragraph by paragraph.

* At the time when this and the two following letters were written, Munro was one of three assistants employed under Major (afterwards Lieut.-Colonel) Alexander Read, in the settlement and administration of the territory now known as the District of Salem, which, under the treaty of 1792, had been ceded by Tippoo to the East India Company. These letters, which are not included in the Revenue Selections published by the late Court of Directors, nor, as far as I am aware, in any other official publication, were first published by Mr. Ballantine Dykes in his history of the Salem District (*Salem: an Indian Collectorate. By James William Ballantine Dykes, of the Madras Civil Service*).

† The Regulations here referred to will be found in the appendix to vol. ii. (Appendix A). They do not appear to have received the sanction of the Board of Revenue, or of the Government of Madras; but with the exception of the period during which the ryotwár system was superseded in the Salem District by the múttadári system, which was introduced by the Government of Sir George Barlow, but which subsequently collapsed, and except in one important point which will be noticed presently, Colonel Read's regulations have, in their leading features, up to the present time, formed the basis upon which the revenue administration of the Salem District, and of most of the other ryotwár districts of the Madras Presidency, has been conducted. The exception to which I allude, is the provision of Rule III., the first noticed by Munro in the present letter, which declares the assessment to be 'fixed 'for ever.' By the advocates of a permanent settlement of the land revenue this rule has been more than once quoted as precluding any enhancement of the assessment, at all events in the Salem District; but the view thus urged has not been at any time accepted by the Government. Within ten years after the Regulations in question were issued, they were practically annulled by the introduction of the múttadári system, under which the greater part of the land in Salem was parcelled out into estates of various sizes, and sold by public auction to persons who, under the designation of múttadárs, and in the capacity of superior landlords, were to collect the rents from the ryots as

Rule 3.—*The survey assessment on each field being fixed for ever, so long as that be duly paid by the ryot, so long will he hold possession thereof.*

If the settlement is intended to be permanent, and not to be open to revision at the end of five years, the intention should be explicitly stated.

As it has been always supposed that the lease is for five years,* if the words 'for ever,' here used, do actually mean a longer term than five years, it ought to be made known to the ryots, not joined to a mass of other matter, but by itself; for, till this is done, those who wish to improve their farms will limit their views to five years, and will be deterred from undertaking any expensive work by the fear of a new settlement coming upon them at the end of that period.

Rule 4.—*The assessment of all such lands as may hereafter be cultivated, which, not being occupied, and consequently not included in the survey, had not then been valued, to be fixed with reference to the survey rates of that or the nearest villages, and such assessment, according to the custom of the country, to be proportionally reduced, in certain cases, for the first or the first two years.*

Land hitherto uncultivated cannot,

If it is here meant that all the uncultivated lands of a village are to be rented for a certain part of the average rate

their tenants, and therefrom to pay the Government assessment. And in a recent revision of the ryotwár assessment, which was re-introduced into a great part of the district on the failure of the múttadári system, the declaration made by Read has not been allowed to prevent an enhancement of the rates in those cases in which they have been found to be unduly low. The fact seems to be, that the proclamation issued by Read not having received the sanction of the Executive Government, has not been considered to be binding, although its main provisions have been generally followed, with the exception above noticed.

* It appears to have been the intention of the authorities at Madras that the land should be let to the ryots on lease for five years. Read was opposed to such an arrangement. Munro was at first in favour of it, deeming it inexpedient to allow the ryots to alter the size of their holdings from year to year. His opinion at this time seems to have been that such a concession would hinder the spread of productive cultivation, by inducing ryots to give up good land for the sake of obtaining waste land of an inferior quality on more favourable terms. He subsequently came round to the opinion that, at the end of every year, a ryot should be allowed to give up or alter his holding, and either to throw up a part of his land or to occupy more land, according to circumstances; subject, however, to the condition that he must take or throw up proportional shares of good and bad land together. This condition is no longer enforced in the Madras Presidency. Under the existing rules, every ryot is at liberty to relinquish any portion of his land, provided that it is not less than a whole survey field, or than the entire portion of a field in his holding. The following is the text of the regulations now in force in the Ballári District regarding the relinquishment of land:—

'A ryot is at liberty to relinquish 'any portion of his land, provided it 'is not less than a whole survey field, 'or a field marked out conformably to 'the Shikmi number rules' (rules by which the division of unusually large fields is regulated), 'or than the entire 'portion of a field in his holding, and 'provided he proffers such relinquish'ment in writing, on or before the 15th 'July, either to the Tahsildár or Col'lector.'

of the cultivated lands of that village, or the three neighbouring villages, it may answer in some few instances; but if it is meant that the uncultivated are to be rated at the full rent of the cultivated lands, there are many objections to it on every side. Were such a valuation just, it ought to follow that the cultivated and uncultivated lands are on the whole equally good. There are some cases where, on account of water or some other circumstances, the village having been built among the worst lands, they are cultivated, while those of a better quality, which are at a distance, are left waste; but nine times in ten the village is near the lands which are naturally best. The uncultivated lands, therefore, being both of poor quality and at a distance from the village, these disadvantages form such a drawback upon them, that they will never, with the same labour, be able at the most to afford to pay more than half the average rents of those now in cultivation. Assessing them at the full average, so much beyond their real worth, is in fact condemning the greatest part of them to remain for ever in their present state. A partial remedy is, however, applied to this evil by what is called the changeably-rated lands; but the plan proposed for them has so many inconveniences, and is altogether so intricate, that I doubt if ever it can be effectually carried into practice. By their getting a different value, in proportion to the number of years that they have been waste or cultivated, and by the farmers being at liberty to relinquish them whenever they please, the registry of them will become so complicated that it will be impossible for the district, and far less for division servants, to check them; and the curnums* will therefore, as often from ignorance as design, confound the different descriptions. These regulations will not only introduce confusion among accounts, but they will also discourage long leases, by giving greater encouragement to the cultivation of waste than of arable lands; for the ryots will cultivate the waste the first year for quarter, and the second year for half rent; but in the third year, instead of paying full rent for it, they will throw it up, and take another piece at half and quarter rent, as before.

as a rule, pay the same assessment as land which has long been under cultivation, the latter being generally better land and more favourably situated.

Proposals for applying changeable rates to fallow land too intricate,

and calculated to discourage the continued cultivation of the same land.

Rule 7.—*Proportion of the survey assessment to be paid by such castes as may not themselves till the soil.*

Brahmans are usually understood to be assessed at three-

* *Curnum*, properly *karnam*, the village accountant.

Proposed assessment of land held by Brahmans less favourable than that now paid by them.

quarters of the full rent of their lands, but they probably, one with another, do not pay above one-half. They will therefore hardly consider it as an indulgence to be rated at four-fifths.*

Rule 8.—*Proportion of the survey assessment to be paid by refugees.*

Not advisable to attract settlers from the Carnatic.

As the inhabitants of the Carnatic contribute largely, though not so directly as those of the Baramahal,† to the public resources, it does not seem to be necessary to hold out any encouragement to draw them back from their present lands. It is, however, otherwise with new settlers from Tippoo's country, for every man who comes from thence is so much gained. But I would never remove old heads of the village, as is here proposed, to make room for strangers; for they might sometimes, from resentment, emigrate with their friends, and we might by this means lose more by the desertion of old than we should gain by the arrival of new subjects.

Old heads of villages should not be removed to make way for strangers.

Rule 11.—*The condition of tenure of annual tenants.*

Regulation for annual tenures calculated to discourage long leases.

This regulation will discourage long tenures, and cannot, therefore, be expected to produce any good effects. After the farmers understand it perfectly, they will prefer annual leases, to those of a longer date, because they give them the same security and advantages without hindering them from throwing up their lands whenever they can get a better bargain anywhere else. Some will take at a low rent the lands of inámdárs who want cultivators, and others will employ the greatest part of their stock in cultivating at half rent in the name of emigrants, who are perhaps little more than their servants.

Rule 29.—*Of contracts for tank repairs.*

This regulation is very proper, except that it will not be safe to trust the tank inámdárs‡ with money for repairs.

Rules of assessment on the whole too complicated.

The great defects of this system are its complicated rules of assessment, which demand too much talent, and minute

* The practice of allowing favourable rates of assessment to ryots belonging to certain castes continued in force for many years, but was ultimately abolished in 1859.

† Strictly speaking, the Baramahal includes only a portion—viz. the taluks of Krishnagiri, Dharmapúri, Tripatúr, and Uttangarai—of the district which was under Read's management, and which did not comprise the whole of the district now known as Salem, the taluks of Oossoor and Denkanikota not having become British territory until after the death of Tippoo; but Munro here applies the term Baramahal to the whole of the district under Read, and in his later minutes to the whole of the district of Salem, as it now exists.

‡ Tank inámdárs, *i.e.* persons holding land free of assessment, or at a favourable assessment, in consideration of their keeping an irrigation tank in repair.

attention on the part of every class of revenue servants, to offer any reasonable hope that they can long be strictly observed; its checking improvement, by encouraging the farmers to change their lands every second or third year; and its hindering the extension of cultivation beyond its present limits, by the high valuation of waste. One general regulation for waste lands will never suit the whole country; it must be modified according to the state of every particular district, but in none will they ever pay the average rent of the arable lands, as prescribed in your fourth paragraph. In most of the districts above Tápúr, they may pay three-quarters of it; but below, they will hardly ever give more than one-half, and in many places not more than one-third. They will give a greater or smaller proportion, according as the districts are poorly or highly cultivated. In the northern districts, where there is so much waste, and where the arable lands have received so little improvement from industry, waste is often taken the first year at three-quarters of the average rent of the village; but in the southern districts, where agriculture is better understood, where most of the fields are inclosed, and where, in many places, there is no waste except such as is utterly unfit for cultivation, no man will give so much in less than three years, and very seldom even then. Your valuation of waste is therefore too low in the northern districts the first and second years, but on the third it is too high everywhere. The high valuation might be useful, if it discouraged the farmers from giving up the lands which they have taken in lease; but as it does not come into play till the third year, it is too late to have this effect, for the low terms of the first and second years will have already tempted them to abandon them. When, therefore, the other districts shall, like Tripatúr,* have the option of keeping or not keeping lands which they have taken for five years, there is no doubt but that they will give up a great part of them, for the sake of getting waste on low terms. The total cultivation of the country will not be increased by this means, for waste requires more labour than arable land; and as it is less productive, the total gross produce of the country will be diminished by the

Calculated to hinder extension of cultivation.

Assessment of waste land must be regulated by local circumstances.

The proposed rules will tend to the relinquishment of the more productive and to the cultivation of the less productive lands, thus diminishing the gross produce of the country.

* The regulations referred to in this letter were contained in a proclamation addressed to the 'agriculturists, merchants, and other inhabitants of the district (taluk) of Tripatúr.' Tripatúr did not form part of Munro's charge.

difference between the produce of all the arable lands thus relinquished and that of the waste taken in exchange, and the public revenue will be diminished by the difference between the full rent of the one and the half and quarter rent of the other; and though it will be everywhere advantageous to the farmers to cultivate waste the first year, yet, as the rent of it is too high in many the second year, and in all the third, some of it must be given up the second, and all of it the third year. There must, therefore, always be such a portion of waste in the country as will supply the demand for these exchanges; and by these means it will become impossible ever to bring the whole land of the country into cultivation, or, at least, it will be protracted much beyond the time in which it might be accomplished by proceeding upon other principles.

Such a system cannot be good.

A system never can be good which causes the ryots to forsake productive for unproductive lands, or which either totally prevents or retards the increase of cultivation. All regulations are only so far useful as they contribute, in the first place, to secure the cultivation of all the arable lands, and in the second place, to accelerate that of the waste. If the inhabitants are not allured by the prospect of getting waste on favourable terms, they can have no other motive for giving up their arable lands, unless that of their being over-valued. Where this is the case, they ought to be lowered. The best rule for disposing of waste would perhaps be to have none at all, or, if there was any, it should only be that the rent of it should never exceed the average of the village, but that there should be no limitation to the degree it might fall below it. The demand for it, and of consequence the rent of it, must follow the natural course of improvement, and be high or low, in every different place, according to the varying circumstances of the inhabitants. The great object to be kept in view is, by extending cultivation as much as possible, to increase the gross produce of the country. When this is done, there will be no difficulty in afterwards drawing from it a proportional revenue. Every restriction which can in any manner impede cultivation, ought to be abolished; for it is better that the whole, or as much as possible, of the waste should now be cultivated at the most trifling rent, than it should be delayed to a distant period, for the sake of bringing it to the average of the arable lands.

Rules for assessing waste should vary with the varying circumstances of the inhabitants.

The great object is to extend cultivation and increase the gross produce of the country.

With the exception of the lands belonging to tanks, of which the supplies of water are uncertain, no other lands ought to be given in rent by Government for a shorter term than five years. The objection to the expediency of a lease, that many of the ryots have failed, might with equal propriety be applied to annual settlements; for as many have failed, and will fail, under the one mode, as under the other; and under either, the amount of them will always be less than the additional revenue which will accrue from new cultivation. The cause of them cannot be speedily removed, for it lies in the universal poverty of the farmers, among whom there are scarcely any gradations of rich and poor, as in other countries. We received them from Tippoo with no property, except a few cattle; many of them have not even a single bullock, but hire two or three during the ploughing season; and when one man fails, another cannot purchase or even rent his lands, because he has hardly stock to cultivate his own. The few merchants who have a little money, will not lay it out on land, of which they cannot be sure of having a lasting possession. Were a remission to be made of half the revenue, failures would still be almost as numerous as ever; for, as perhaps near one-half of all the farmers in the country do not pay above ten pagodas (£3 10*s.*) each, if we suppose their share of the produce is twenty pagodas (£7), and if we remit half their rent, they will then have twenty-five pagodas (£8 15*s.*); but the difference to them is so inconsiderable, that it is not likely that it would so much increase their savings as to make any great alterations in the number of failures. This inconvenience will therefore exist until the greater part of them shall, by the exertions of successful industry, have raised themselves, in different degrees, above their present distressed condition. In most of the districts above Tápúr, the rent is so very moderate, that it can hardly be much reduced without abandoning revenue altogether.

Except in the case of land irrigated from tanks, no leases should be for shorter periods than five years.

By surveying this year Pennagar, Adamankota, and Tengarikota, I have had a better opportunity than ever I had before of comparing the situation of the inhabitants of the southern and northern districts, and I imagine that, after making every allowance for the superior fertility of the soil, and all other advantages, the assessment of the southern is, on an average, twelve or fifteen per cent. higher than that of the

Assessment of the southern districts of the Baramahal higher than that of the northern districts.

northern provinces. The southern pay about twenty-four, and the northern eleven fanams,* for every acre of dry land; some of the principal farmers who, under the former Government, acted rather as revenue officers than as cultivators, pay more now than they did then, because many of them paid very little, and a few, by throwing their own rents upon the under-farmers, paid nothing at all; but the great body of the cultivators pay now less rent than formerly, and they are also relieved from fines and numberless other exactions. It is not, however, from this to be inferred that failures will not in future happen: they will always happen when farms are so numerous and so small. Though small farms have this inconvenience, it is better that it should be so, than that they should be enlarged; for if a number of them were incorporated into one, as the principal farmer has no more stock than is sufficient for the cultivation of his own original share, he could give no assistance to the under-farmers; their lands would, therefore, be no better cultivated than before they joined him; and of course failures would be just as numerous as ever. If, in order to prevent failures, the rents on consolidated farms were reduced, the head farmers would be gainers, but revenue would be diminished, and a greater number of industrious men would be deprived, by the consolidation, of the advantage of making the most of their labour.

Smallness of the farms, not a disadvantage.

As the assessment now stands, the amount of failures, one year with another, will probably be about half per cent. The produce of new cultivation will be more than this deficiency, as it will go on accumulating from year to year. Government will always receive somewhat more revenue than at present; but as, in order to preserve things in this state, a degree of persevering attention will be required, which cannot always be easily found, I would recommend that the gross revenue of all the lands included in the lease settlement, exclusive of service ináms, should be reduced twenty per cent. If this is done, the collections will be made without difficulty, and will not require much experience to manage them; the farmers will have no temptation to abandon their arable lands to occupy waste, which will render the complicated details of changeably-rated lands in a great measure unnecessary. By degrees,

The present assessment should be reduced twenty per cent.

* The fanam is an obsolete coin, equal to about twopence in English money.

though slowly, lands will become saleable, new settlers will be induced to come from the westward, and cultivation will extend so rapidly, that in ten or fifteen years the amount of revenue will probably be as much as it would have been had no abatement of it ever been granted; while the inhabitants, by having within that period the whole of their property at least doubled, will then pay with ease what they now pay with difficulty.

If this is done, land will by degrees become saleable, and cultivation will extend.

Nothing will so much tend to hasten the accomplishment of this object as the making over in perpetuity the lands to their present occupants.* This alone can show all the resources of the country, and bring into action all the property that the inhabitants actually possess. Under leases of five or ten years, they will not think themselves secure; the recollection of former times, when new demands always followed close upon the ability of paying them, will dispose them rather to hoard their gains than to employ them in useful labour. This will be a great obstacle to lands becoming saleable, and, until they shall be saleable, cultivation will never be carried to any high point of perfection, nor will revenue be permanent, unless with more good management than can usually be expected from collectors.

The land should be made over in perpetuity to the present occupants.

* It is not expressly stated, but it might be inferred from the wording of this and other passages in Munro's writings, that he was in favour, not only of making the land over to the ryots in perpetuity, but also of fixing the money assessment permanently. There can be no doubt that Munro was a warm and consistent advocate of moderate assessments, and of fixity of assessment, so far as the latter could be granted compatibly with the financial requirements of the State; but there is at least one passage which shows that, whatever may have been his precise view at this period of his career, his later opinion was not in favour of what is usually understood by a permanent settlement of the land revenue, viz. such a settlement as would debar the Government from raising the assessment in money under any circumstances whatever—such, for instance, as is considered to preclude an enhancement of the assessment in the zemindári districts of Bengal. See the concluding paragraph of the Minute on the State of the Country and Condition of the People, dated 31st December, 1824, p. 275, where, after urging the expediency of lowering the land revenue and establishing a moderate and fixed assessment, he adverts to the possibility of an enhancement of that assessment being found necessary in case of war, thus materially qualifying the sense in which he uses the term 'fixed.'

THE SAME SUBJECT.

To Colonel Read.

Yerrapádi, 18th July, 1797.

SIR,

The productive power of the land largely influenced by the condition of the cultivators and their ability to cultivate it well.

You have frequently strongly insisted on the necessity of valuing lands by their intrinsic quality, without any regard to the circumstances of the cultivator; but this conveys but a vague idea, for land is good or bad in proportion to the degree of labour bestowed upon it; and it depends upon the condition of the cultivators whether it is ploughed one time or seven, or whether it is completely manured or not at all. The value of its produce will be influenced by the general wealth or poverty of the whole body of the people; and the person who makes the valuation must consider the general circumstances of them, though not that of individuals; for what was reckoned high rent at one period, may be low at another; so that it is impossible to separate the idea of the value of land from that of the state of the country. The assessor has only to take care to be so moderate, that any man who has the means of giving the land the most ordinary degree of cultivation, may be able to pay the rent: he who gives more ought to reap all the benefits of his extra labour and expense; he who gives less, as he will be continually falling in arrears, would be more usefully employed as a labourer than as an independent farmer.

Option given to the ryots to give up land annually, renders unnecessary the reduc-

When, in my letter of the 15th November, I gave it as my opinion that it would be proper to reduce the rents on an average twenty per cent., it was on the supposition that all the lands included in the lease settlement were to be kept in

cultivation; but as the ryots may now give up whatever part of them they choose, I consider such an option as an equivalent for the proposed reduction, and therefore no longer think it necessary; because I reckon that the ryots will give up ten or fifteen per cent. of their land entirely; that, besides this, they will always give up annually such fields as they mean for late crops, and not take them till the year is far advanced, when they have seen what the season is likely to be, by which means they will escape the losses of bad years; and thus, from these two causes, they will gain nearly as much as they could have done by the reduction. No allowance is to be made for the ten or fifteen per cent. of land which the ryot relinquishes, because, as his whole farm was but poorly cultivated, he may still have the same amount of produce by employing his extra stock on his remaining fields.

tion of twenty per cent. proposed in the preceding letter.

As the demands of the former Government always rose in proportion to the degree of culture, and as the man who carried it further than his neighbours was frequently exposed to the imposition of arbitrary fines, on suspicion of being rich, the ryots found it more convenient to occupy a great extent of ground badly cultivated at a moderate rate, than to pay an equal, or a greater sum, for a smaller extent well cultivated. The valuator of the land at the time of the survey calculated that the ryots would, as usual, take much more land than their stock could fully cultivate, and he made his assessment accordingly. Had he known that they were to give up a part, and employ their whole stock on the rest, he would have raised his valuation. The ryots have therefore gained by this circumstance, in proportion to the quantity of land they throw up. Should they, however, contrary to my expectation, not give up ten or fifteen per cent., I think it would be proper to make a reduction of rent equal to the difference.

Regulations proposed in the event of annual settlements being adopted.

I have already given the preference to a lease on a reduced rent; but if annual settlements are to be adopted, the following rules would, I imagine, afford to the ryots every advantage that could be granted to them, consistent with the insuring of a future permanent revenue, whilst they would enable us to dispense with a great part of the troublesome or perhaps impracticable details inserted in your code.

1st. All lands included in the lease should remain invariably at the rent then fixed.

2nd. All lands not included in the lease should be rented at the average of the village to which they belong.

3rd. Lands included, being given up and allowed to lie waste, no matter how many years, should, when again occupied, pay, the very first year, the full rent, as before.

4th. All castes, whether natives or aliens, should pay the same rent for the same land.

5th. No additional rent should ever be demanded for improvements. The ryot who, by digging a well, or building a tank, converts dry land into garden or rice-fields, should pay no more than the original rent of the ground.

6th. No reduction of the established rents ever to be allowed, except where the mulberry plant and cochineal are cultivated.

7th. All ryots to be permitted, every year, to give up and take whatever lands they please.

8th. Villages and districts must be jointly responsible for all.

These rules seem to comprise the substance of all that is necessary for conducting an annual settlement. I shall in a few words give my reasons for each of them.

1st. *All lands included in the leases should remain invariably at the rent then fixed.*

Reasons for not altering the assessment as fixed in the leases, in the event of the adoption of annual settlements

Were rents not fixed, no estimate could be formed of the probable amount of revenue for any future year; a rise in them would discourage agriculture, and destroy all confidence on the part of the cultivators; a reduction of them would tempt the ryots to plead poverty continually, and even to throw up a part of their lands, in hopes of obtaining a further abatement; and in either case, not only the inhabitants, but also the Collector, would be more dependent on the cutcherry than he would be if rents were permanent. Many fields have, no doubt, been overrated in the survey; but it is better that they should stand so, than that reductions should be made, which, when once begun, cannot easily be limited. It is no hardship on the ryots, for they can throw them up for the present, and occupy them again at any period hereafter, when they find themselves better able to pay the assessment.

2nd. *All lands not included in the lease should be rented at the average of the village to which they belong.*

Rents are so low in these countries, that the average is

Reasons for assessing all land not included in the lease at the average assessment of the village to which it belongs.

not too high even for the worst lands. It will be as accurate, though not so much in detail, as the assessment of surveyors, who seldom can pronounce with any certainty on the quality of land, and who, even where they can judge, are easily brought to give a false statement. It will save the expense of valuation and of numerous accounts; it will simplify the Collector's business, lessen the influence of his revenue servants, and enable him to comprehend at once, as well as any of them, the whole detail of every future settlement; and it will answer the important purpose of keeping the ryots to their present farms, by removing the motive to change. Were the waste valued according to its supposed worth, with almost every field at a different rate, and almost every one of them greatly below the average of the village, which would be the case in a measure of this kind, the ryots would by degrees abandon a great part of their old fields for new, because a little labour will make the one nearly as good as the other. They will give up a field that produces one hundred and pays thirty, for one that yields ninety and pays ten; and, after making allowance for the extra expense and labour required by the worse soil, they will perhaps gain five by the change, though revenue loses twenty. The country at large also loses by this operation, because, with more labour and expense, there is twenty per cent. less of produce. I consider the objection which may be made to an average estimate, of there being numberless gradations of good and bad soil, as of very little consequence. The ryots have it in their power to select, and they will take the best first. There is so much land of every description now uncultivated, and so thin a population, that it will be long before they are constrained to take what is now bad; but before such an event can happen, there must be a vast increase of population and surplus of stock; and these very circumstances will of themselves continually raise the value of lands in their progress, and may at last render the most barren as productive as are now those which are under the highest cultivation. It may be also objected, that there are, from a variety of causes, a few fields lying waste in almost every village, equal to the best lands in it, and that to rent them at the average would be a loss to revenue; but this loss would be trifling, and it would be better to incur it than to introduce confusion, by departing from the rule.

3rd. *Lands included in the lease being given up and allowed to be waste, no matter how many years, should, when again occupied, pay, the very first year, the full rent, as before.*

Importance of discouraging the abandonment of good land for the sake of cultivating waste at a favourable assessment.

It is intended by this to discourage the ryots from giving up their best lands for waste, with the view of getting them again on more favourable terms, and to induce them to turn their whole attention to the improvement of such lands as they have; which they never will do as long as they have an interest in making perpetual changes. To lower the rent of lands in proportion to the number of years that they remain unoccupied, would not only diminish revenue now, but would also, by taking away the necessity of a more perfect cultivation, retard its increase hereafter. By insisting always on the full rent, there is no danger of checking the extension of cultivation. There are few fields which, after having been long suffered to lie waste, may not in two years be rendered as productive as ever; and the ryot who is in a condition to occupy highly-assessed lands, will not be deterred from it by any trifling loss which he may sustain the first year: he who cannot afford to run this risk, must content himself with improving those he already holds.

Deviations from the proposed rules necessary in the case of 'wet' lands and palmyra plantations.

Some deviations, however, from the above two rules will be necessary with respect to 'wet' lands and palmyra plantations. The waste of 'wet' lands must be valued, not according to the average of the whole 'wet' of the village, but of the particular class to which it belongs, either of land yielding two crops a year, one crop a year, or only one crop in two years.

In palmyra plantations the rents fluctuate, because the produce depends not only on the soil, but also on their age. Young plantations will pay more and more, as they approach to maturity. Plantations containing a mixture of young and old trees may pay always the same, as the young trees will supply the place of those which decay; but some plantations, which contain old trees only, will cease to pay rent when their juices are exhausted. The rent of the young plantations must be altered from year to year; that of the mixed plantations may be made permanent, and that of the old may also be made so by granting such a reduction as might encourage the holders to plant young trees, which might begin to yield some return before the old were entirely decayed. It would be much the

simplest method, and would, I imagine, be the most advantageous in the end, to relinquish the extra revenue of the trees and to give all plantations for the ground-rent. They ought to be divided, as other lands are, into fields, which would prevent all imposition; for at present, as there are no marks of separation, and as they are rented in lots of trees intermixed with each other, the people who rent only one quarter of a plantation may take the produce of the whole, without any danger of discovery.

4th. *All castes, whether natives or aliens, should pay the same rent for the same land.*

All castes should pay the same rates of assessment.

The rents almost everywhere in the country are adapted to the rudest state of cultivation; they are so low, that every man who has the means of ploughing and manuring his fields may easily pay them. I therefore think that the whole of your rules respecting fallow and waste, and remissions to various privileged castes, are altogether unnecessary, and that all descriptions of people should pay the same rent. Under the head of castes entitled to a favourable term, I believe you comprehend Brahmans, Moormen,* merchants, and almost every man who does not belong to the Sudra or cultivating caste; and even among them, the head farmers.

Were the rent so high as to require some extraordinary exertion of industry to discharge it, a few particular castes might have claim to some indulgence; but this not being the case, there is no reason why a Brahman should pay less than a ryot. He may perform every operation of agricultural labour, except that of holding the plough;—many of the principal farmers never take it more than he does. It is want of stock, rather than of personal labour, that usually occasions failures. If the Brahman has it, he may manage his farm and pay his rent as well as them; if he has it not, his only remedy is to get land at an under rate; but as he furnishes neither stock nor labour, it is evident that whatever he receives is in fact a gratuity, and a deduction from revenue, which the cultivator gives to him, instead of paying to Government.

Merchants have still less right to indulgence than Brahmans, because they have usually the means of stocking their farms. There are no religious restraints on the labour of Mussulmans, and there is therefore nothing to hinder them from

* By 'Moormen' he means 'Mahomedans.'

paying the same rent as ryots. If it were admitted that the rents of different castes were to be diminished according to their idleness, there would be no end to the task of regulation; for there is a wider difference between the more industrious and less industrious castes of ryots than between them and the Brahmans. Such distinctions are customary, under most of the native governments, but rather with respect to individuals than castes, because they take from all as much as they can get; by which means it often happens that the poorer ryots pay less than Brahmans.

Favourable terms should not be held out to aliens.

I do not think that any advantage will be derived from holding out favourable terms even to aliens. The people on both sides of the Cavery are so much connected with each other, that it is difficult to say who are aliens and who are not. The same man has frequently lands both under Tippoo and the Company; and he is sometimes on one side and sometimes on the other. The regulation would encourage many of our own ryots to cross the river, and return next year to another district as aliens; and we might soon see the revenue reduced, without any increase of population. There is no scarcity of land beyond the Cavery; and if Tippoo's amildars saw their ryots going off, they could easily counteract us, by granting terms still more favourable. We ought to trust to a long continuance of mild and just government, rather than to extremely low rents, for drawing emigrants from the neighbouring countries. All these distinctions are liable to abuses, without being of the smallest real advantage. Threats of fines and punishments would little avail in checking them, because it is the interest of every man in the country, except the Collector, to conceal them. The Collector, isolated in the midst of strangers, has nothing to depend upon but his own vigilance, which, at best, is only a casual aid; but that which opposes him—self-interest—is a principle which acts without intermission. Were it even possible that every fraud could be prevented, it would still be unadvisable to make distinctions, because such a system would swell accounts beyond all bounds, and draw along with it such complicated details as could never be followed out. A system of revenue, to be permanent, should be so simple that every future Collector may be perfectly able to conduct it. It will, therefore, be better that the rules should be few,

as well on this account, as in order to diminish the expense of collection.

5th. *No additional rent should be demanded for improvements.*

Inexpediency of taxing improvements.

I have sometimes thought that this regulation might diminish revenue, but I am now perfectly convinced that no such consequence is to be apprehended. It may in some instances appear to hinder it from rising so rapidly as it would otherwise have done, but it will never bring it below the point to which it has already attained. It may be said that when a ryot digs a well for the purpose of making a garden, as the garden requires much more labour than his other lands, he will give up a portion of them in order to cultivate it, and thereby lessen revenue; but as wells are expensive, and are always attended with the risk of not finding water after all, the probability is that when a ryot becomes master of a little surplus stock, he will rather take an additional field or two, in which there is little expense and no risk, than try the experiment of digging a well; but should his circumstances be such as to enable him to venture a small sum without materially injuring himself, it does not follow that, after making a well, he will give up any part of his farm; for as the work of the garden is performed at different hours from that of the other lands, and is continued during the dry season, when there is nothing to do upon them, he can cultivate it without increasing the number of his labourers. Should he afterwards save any money from the profits of this garden, he will employ it either in taking another field or digging another well; but most likely in taking the field, because water can only be found in certain situations.

Before many wells can be dug, we are to suppose that the stock of the ryots has been in general augmented; but in all places where there is no water near the surface of the earth, the whole of this additional stock will be employed in extending the limits of the old farms; and even where, in watery situations, it is used in making wells, it will hardly ever diminish, and will always ultimately increase cultivation. It may therefore be concluded that the state of things which enables ryots to make gardens will almost always augment, and scarcely ever lessen revenue.

These observations may be equally applied to the build-

ing of private tanks, with this difference, that, as they are more extensive than wells, they ought to excite the less fear of a decrease of cultivation. There are other very essential advantages to be expected from wells and tanks, which make it expedient to remove every obstacle to their construction. It is chiefly from the profits of them that we must hope to see arise, what does not at present exist in the country, a class of substantial and rich farmers. Nothing would more tend to secure a country from famine than numerous wells. They are so little affected by the seasons, that their crops seldom fail; they require no expensive repairs, they do not fill up, nor are they liable to be swept away by floods, or to be destroyed by an enemy, like tanks; but they enable the cultivator to resume his labour, without even waiting for rain, the moment the danger is over. Private tanks, as they would be so small, and scattered over every part of the country, would be less subject than those of Government to the accidental loss of their produce, and would therefore be a better security against scarcity. Had it ever been the practice, under Indian Governments, instead of building tanks themselves, to have let the ryots do it, without raising their rents, there would now have been infinitely more wet lands than there are, an equal or a greater revenue from them, and without any expense to the public. If the old system of imposing an additional rent on every improvement be persevered in, the people will remain for ever poor, and revenue uncertain.*

Security against famine afforded by numerous wells.

6th. *No reduction of the established rent ever to be allowed except where the cochineal plant, mulberry, &c., are cultivated.*

The exception in favour of these articles is agreeable to your cowle; and as great benefits may be expected from it, and every abuse easily detected, it ought to be carried into effect.

7th. *All ryots to be permitted, every year, to give up whatever old and to take whatever new lands they please.*

The ryots now understand pretty well that their rents will not be raised, but they imagine that they may still be

* It seems almost incomprehensible, but it is the fact, that these wise and statesmanlike views were not fully acted on until 1852, more than half a century after this letter was written.

lowered. Having, therefore, no inducement to wish for a lease of five years, so very few of them have asked for it, that I have not thought it necessary to make any deviation from an annual settlement on their account. So long as there is no apprehension of rents being raised, the demand for lands in lease will be very gradual, and only from the more substantial farmers. Those who desire it ought to have their lands made over to them in perpetuity, without any charge of purchase-money.

Advantages of removing all restrictions on the occupation of Government land.

A great deal of the lands which are above the average will be given up, but a considerable part of them, where the advantages of fertility or situation counterbalance the difference of rent, will still be kept. The diminution of revenue by those given up will be more or less in different districts, according as the lands in general approach to, or recede from, the average. The ryots must not be obliged to cultivate all their old high-rented lands as the condition of their receiving waste: such stipulations as these could easily be evaded by using fictitious names, and would only serve to perplex the Collector and harass the ryots, to no purpose. The whole loss to be incurred by changing the lease into an annual settlement will be known in the course of the current year; for, though a few high-rated lands may still remain to be given up next year, this loss will be made up by lands relinquished in the present year with a view of obtaining a reduction of their rent, which the former cultivators will again occupy when they find that their project has failed.

Revenue having reached its lowest point of depression, will, after next year, begin to rise regularly and uniformly. The ryots having changed every field that they wish to get rid of, and having chosen such as they like, will consider their farms as an inalienable property, and will begin in earnest to improve them with their whole means; revenue will be permanent; settlements will consist merely in adding the amount of the new lands demanded by the ryots to the rent of the former year, and in some few instances making a deduction of fields left unoccupied on account of death or failure; and the ryots may have their lands made over to them in perpetuity, from time to time, in proportion as they demand them. All the effects of a lease will thus be

naturally produced, though under a different name; and the system is so simple, and the rules so few, that it may be easily managed by any Collector who bestows on it the most common degree of attention. After removing all restraints on the occupation of Government lands, it will perhaps be necessary to impose some on the cultivation of private inâms.* There is enough of this description lying waste to employ a very great number of ryots, and of course to occasion a correspondent reduction of revenue. To prevent this, these inâmdârs may be prohibited, as they have always hitherto been, from drawing away ryots from the Government lands; or all inâms which are now waste may be made subject to a quit-rent, whenever they are brought into cultivation, or they may be completely resumed. The quit-rent appears to be the mode to which there are the fewest objections.

Inâm lands should be made subject to a quit-rent.

Advantage of having a large number of independent landholders of various grades.

I do not think it is a thing to be desired, that Government should have no tenants but a few great proprietors. They would contribute nothing to the security of the revenue, for they are as likely as the petty farmers to fail, from misfortune or imprudence, and more likely to do so from design; for they are more capable of intriguing and combining together, in unfavourable seasons and times of hostility, for withholding their rents, under various pretexts. On the contrary, by adapting the system of collection to the condition of the inhabitants, the country is filled with a multitude of small independent farmers, who extend or contract their farms according to their different success. This freedom will in time produce all the various gradations of rich and poor proprietors and large and small farms; and by leaving every man who does not choose to serve another, to set up for himself, the fairest chance and the widest scope is given to the progress of industry and population; the people are themselves happier than they could be, parcelled out among great landholders; they are also more easily managed, and the Collector, by being obliged to enter into engagements with them all, is better able to judge of the state and resources of the country.

* *Inâm*—an Arabic word, of which the original meaning is gift, benefaction, a gift from a superior to an inferior. In the south of India the term is especially applied to grants of land held free, either wholly or in part, from the payment of revenue to the State.

ON THE SAME SUBJECT.

To Colonel Read.

Trichengode, 5th September, 1797.

SIR,

Since transmitting you my letter of the 18th July, I have received yours of the 25th of the same month. I shall now, as you request, answer it, paragraph by paragraph, though I have little to observe that will not be mere repetition of what I have already said on the same subject.

Para. 1.—*Poverty of the inhabitants in general.*

A long series of oppressive governments, and particularly under Tippoo, had reduced the country, when delivered over to the Company, to such a state that a rich farmer was nowhere to be found; not one among them, perhaps, was worth one hundred pagodas (£35), exclusive of his farming stock; scarcely one of them rented lands to the amount of fifty pagodas (£17 10*s.*) a year; one-half of all the farms were not above ten pagodas (£3 10*s.*) each; and if there anywhere appeared a farm of eighty pagodas (£28), or one hundred pagodas (£35), though nominally held by one person, it was in fact occupied by three or four families of brothers or relatives. The farmers were then, and are now, composed of three classes. The first contains the small number of those who are able to give their lands the highest degree of cultivation; the second contains those who can give them sufficient to produce an ordinary or moderate crop; and the third, which is as numerous as the second, contains those who, from want of cattle, cannot half plough their lands, and never manure or weed them at all. It is among this last class that failures generally happen; many of them have not a single bullock,

Poverty of the inhabitants of Salem.

Three classes of farmers.

but borrow or hire a pair for a short time during the ploughing season. With such a miserable cultivation, the whole produce of the land is frequently insufficient for their subsistence during the year; far less to pay their rent. Many of them have no serious intention of paying any, when they take the farm. If it is an unusually plentiful season, they give what they can spare; if it is otherwise, they give nothing; and in either case they gain what they wanted, which was to subsist a greater part of the year for less labour than they could have done had they worked as labourers under another man.

The third or poorest class ought to be labourers.

People of this description ought rather to be labourers than farmers in any place, for the relief of the inhabitants. It is those who have some property and pay their rents regularly that ought to be the chief objects of our attention; and a lighter assessment than what they have hitherto experienced will be the only means of bettering their present condition.

Para. 2.—*Frequency of their removals from the lands which they may have occupied the previous year.*

Causes which induce ryots to emigrate.

Ryots remove from a variety of causes, but the principal is inability to pay their rent; another cause is unhealthiness of situation; and in some few instances family disputes produce the same effect; but all these causes combined are not of such magnitude as to have any very material influence on the stability of revenue. The ryots have no particular passion for emigration; they rarely think of quitting their village while they can live in it, and even when, either from too high an assessment, or from misfortune, they are obliged to relinquish their lands, they generally remain where they are, in preference to removing to another village or foreign country; but they are, notwithstanding, still entered in the accounts as emigrants, for it is the practice to consider all ryots who give up their lands as such, whether present or not; and if a man holding two farms under different names in a village, throws up one of them, and takes a larger in exchange in the same village, he is still written down as an emigrant from one farm. By these means there is often a long list of emigration, where little or none has actually happened. It is only when farmers remove with their stock to a foreign country that the revenue suffers a loss; but this is so rare, that in all the districts of Senkaridúrga there has not been a single instance of it during the last twelve months. When a

Much of the supposed emigration more apparent than real.

farmer removes with his stock from one village to another, it makes little or no difference to revenue; because he generally pays the same, or nearly the same, rent as before.

Para. 3.—*Fluctuation of stock.*

Causes of the fluctuation of stock.

The fluctuation of stock may prove detrimental to the revenue in two ways; either when the cattle employed in agriculture are diminished by distempers, or when a part of them are sold out of the country, in order to pay up the rents. The distemper among the horned cattle is not more common, and is perhaps less destructive, than in most other countries; it usually appears after a very long drought, and ceases on the setting in of rainy weather; its ravages never extend over a whole district, far less over whole provinces at once, but are generally confined to a few villages, and are prevented from spreading by the inhabitants of the neighbouring villages driving their cattle to a distance. The loss on these occasions is said to be commonly from one quarter to one half of the whole. The disorder among the sheep sometimes sweeps away the whole stock; but the contagion, as among cattle, is partial. The greater part of the ryots have no sheep at all, and those who have them, have only a small number, which they can therefore the more easily preserve from this infection; and it scarcely ever happens that the loss among them is so great as to disable them from paying their rents. The great sufferers are the shepherds, who travel about the country with large flocks, manuring the lands of the farmers for hire; but as they pay very little rent, their losses cannot materially affect revenue, nor are they long felt in the general stock of sheep in the country; for as it is the custom among shepherds to give individuals of their caste, who have been unfortunate, a small flock by contribution, and as sheep multiply fast, the sufferer in a few years often sees himself master of as many as before.

Fluctuation of stock not sufficient to affect the stability of the revenue.

Cattle and sheep are exported to the Carnatic, and a few to Mysore; but I believe that it is such only as have been bred for sale, and are no part of the farming stock. Numbers of the ploughing cattle of the poorer farmers are sold every year to discharge their rents; but as the greater part had been previously bought at the beginning of the year, by means of the annual advances for cultivation, these farmers are no worse than they were; they have earned their subsistence, paid their

rent, and returned the cattle which they had borrowed, or, what is the same thing, purchased with the borrowed money. They again follow the same course the next, and probably several successive years, till they are fortunate enough to be able to discharge both their rents and advances for cultivation, without being obliged to sell their cattle. But some of the ploughing cattle sold belong to the ryots who have received no advances for cultivation. These men are therefore worse than they were at the beginning of the year; they have lost a part, or the whole, of their cattle, and there is a great fluctuation in their stock; but it does not follow that there is any in that of the whole community; for the cattle have fallen into the hands of richer farmers, and their labour will still be as productive as formerly. In whatever way this subject is considered, there is no ground to apprehend that, either from distemper among the cattle, from their being sold out of the country, or from any other cause, the fluctuation of stock among the farmers will ever be so great as to produce any change in the stability of revenue.

Para. 4.—*Precariousness of crops.*

Precariousness of crops not such as to justify the apprehension of famine in peaceable times.

The crops here are, I imagine, as certain as in any dry-grain country whatever. There is no instance of famine, nor even of any considerable scarcity, having occurred in peaceable times. Different kinds of dry grain are sown from May to November, and wet grain, whenever there is water, all the year round. There is variation in the mode of agriculture, and in the productions of almost every district; so that failures of crops are commonly confined to a particular tract, seldom extending to more than one or two districts, and frequently only to a few villages: but the failure, where greatest, is hardly ever total; some part of the crop is generally saved; and even where the grain has suffered most, the oil-nut, the cotton, and the pulse sown along with it in the same field, may have escaped entirely. Should, however, the whole be lost, the farmer has still other sources to look to; he has other fields, sown at later periods with the same or other kinds of grain, which may yield the usual crops; he can also plough up the field which has failed, and get a late crop from it, which, though not so abundant as the first might have been, will help to pay his rent. By having six months of seedtime to sow, according as the season answers, and by having many different

species of grain, some of which are calculated to resist the attacks of drought and insects, by which others perish, the failure of crops is never general, and scarcely ever such as to destroy the whole harvest of any one farmer: this is a misfortune which can only befall some indigent man, who has only one field, and has not the means of labouring on it for a second crop, after the failure of the first. All other farmers, after the most unfavourable seasons, either obtain as much from their lands as enables them to pay their rents, or they get as much as, when joined to the savings of the preceding year, enables them to do so; or, if they have no former savings, they find people willing to lend them what they want, from the conviction that their distress is only temporary, and will easily be removed by the produce of the ensuing year.

Importance of tanks in giving stability to the revenue.

There is not much rice ground in this country, but all that is watered by the Cavery yields constantly two crops, and the smaller rivers one crop every year. There are many small tanks, which do not give above one crop in three or four years; but this is not any fault of the seasons: from their situation, those who constructed them could never have expected that they would give more; the seasons are not irregular because they are unproductive for three or four years, but they would be irregular were it otherwise. This circumstance will not hurt revenue, because it is supposed that the rent is low in proportion to the supply of water. In villages where there is nearly an equal quantity of wet and dry lands, no variation of the seasons can ever much distress the farmers. If there are frequent gentle showers, not sufficient to fill the tanks, the wet crop fails, but the dry is abundant; if a drought prevails throughout the year, with the exception of only one or two heavy falls of rain, the tanks are filled, and there is a plentiful wet crop, but the dry is lost; so that nothing but what never occurs—an entire cessation of rain for twelve months—can ever deprive the farmers of more than half the usual produce of their lands.* Tanks, therefore, contribute more to revenue than what they pay directly; because they give stability to it, by rendering the ryots more able than they would have been, with no dependence but on their dry crops only, to bear

* Subsequent experience in 1824, in 1833, and in 1866, shows that Munro was over sanguine in regarding a simultaneous failure of the wet crops and of the dry crops as an impossibility.

up against unfavourable seasons. There is upon the whole, however, no such precariousness of the crops in this country as can in the least endanger the permanency of revenue.

Para. 5.—*The fluctuation in the price of grain.*

Price of grain.

I have not observed any remarkable fluctuation in the price of grain. It has fallen from the height to which it had been raised by the war, to the level of the last two years, and will probably remain there until again raised by war, or some extraordinary event. It did not fall completely till the third year after the war, because there was, for near two years, a great demand from Mysore, and because high prices do not immediately cease when the occasion of them is removed. The present price is nearly that by which the settlements were regulated. Every diminution in it will make the condition of the farmers worse, and the difficulty of paying the rents greater than it was intended to have been; but there is no reason to suppose that it will fall any lower: the chance—indeed we may say the certainty—is that all fluctuations hereafter will be above the present standard, and consequently always in their favour. As every rise in the price is to them the same thing as an abatement of rent, it is to be wished that it were somewhat higher, or rather that the demand were greater; but there is no prospect of speedily accomplishing either of these objects, for it can only be done by increasing the exportation, or the home consumption, or by growing less grain, and more productions of greater value; but as all the neighbouring countries have enough of most kinds of grain for their own use, and as the carriage of so bulky an article is very expensive, nothing but scarcity, war, or some such extraordinary occurrence, can produce a temporary increase of exportation from hence. The home consumption can only be augmented by the increase of wealth or population, both of which are slow in their progress.

No prospect of a speedy rise.

Imposition of duties calculated to restrict the cultivation of the more valuable productions of the soil.

It is probable that the abolition of all duties on grain at the beginning of the current year will, by lowering the price to the consumers, somewhat increase the quantity which is sold by the farmers. To raise less grain, and a greater quantity of the more valuable productions of the soil, seems to be the most likely method of rendering it a more profitable commodity to the farmer than it is at present; but as the cultivation of these productions is more expensive than that of grain, and as few of the farmers have much stock, every impost, every restraint,

that might the least discourage them from engaging in such undertakings, ought to be done away with. All the late duties, therefore, on betel, tobacco, and other garden productions, are extremely impolitic, and can only tend to perpetuate the poverty under which the farmers have hitherto laboured.

When a country exports no grain, and has already more than sufficient for its own consumption, every succeeding addition to the population of farmers who cultivate grain only, can add little or nothing to revenue, and will, by diminishing the price as it increases the quantity, prove detrimental to the whole body of cultivators. In such circumstances, any increase of grain cultivators is superfluous to agriculture; but as the laws of their caste hinder them from engaging in manufactures, they must still continue husbandmen, and in this occupation they can only be usefully employed in rearing productions for which there is a demand; but as most of them are too poor to attempt anything out of the common way, every encouragement should be given to those who can. With this view, so far from imposing new taxes on garden productions, all the old ought to be remitted, and no duty of any kind collected on those which are the growth of the country.* The loss to revenue would be trifling and temporary, and the advantage to the farmers great and lasting. It would draw a considerable part of the stock of the principal farmers to the cultivation of garden productions, and as it would by this means diminish the quantity of grain, it would raise the price of it, open a ready market for the sale of the whole of it, and render the price less liable to fluctuation.

As the whole quantity raised in the country cannot always be easily disposed of, not only all the more needy farmers, who are obliged to sell in order to pay their rents, bring the whole of their grain to market the moment the crop is gathered in, but also many of the more substantial, who are in no immediate want, send a portion of their stock there at the same time, from the apprehension of not finding sale for the whole at a later period. This reduces the price of the quantity first brought to market below the level at which it ought naturally

* This view is in accordance with the provisions of Rule 3 in Read's proclamation, but it failed to receive the sanction of the higher authorities for more than half a century. It was not until 1854, under the Government of Lord Harris, that the practice of making the assessment depend upon the description of produce, was formally abolished.

to have sold, and it also has the same effect on the remainder, though in a smaller degree; for when grain is once reduced below its natural price, as the sellers are numerous and indigent, and the buyers few, it is more likely to continue somewhat below than rise to the proper standard.

It is not probable that, in its fluctuations, the price will fall below what it has usually been for the last two years; and while this is the case, they can have no influence in weakening the stability of revenue. The fluctuations of stock, the precariousness of crops, and the price of grain, as far as they regard this point, might be all included under the single head of poverty of the farmers; for it is only the poorest of them, who fail from any of these causes.

Para. 6.—*Present high rental, which generally affords no other reward to the cultivator than the wages of labour.*

Present assessment not excessive, compared with what the farmers have been accustomed to pay.

The present rental is what the farmers have always been accustomed to pay, and it is easier to them than formerly, when the times, and the portions of it to be collected, were arbitrary, and the payment of the whole did not secure them from extra demands. It in most cases affords a greater reward to the cultivator than the wages of labour, and this in various gradations according to his circumstances. There are many who do not pay in rent less than one-half of the produce: some pay only one-third, and others no more than one-quarter, or even one-fifth; but I imagine that about one-third is the proportion which the greatest number pay. The difficulty that the farmers have in procuring new servants, or even in retaining their old ones,—a complaint which is every day heard, and which is occasioned by every man's taking land on his own account as soon as he is master of a single plough—is of itself a sufficient proof that farming affords something more than the wages of labour.

There are several thousand farmers in the country who do not pay more than five pagodas (£1 15*s.*) rent: they must receive more than half the produce, for it cannot be supposed that they maintain themselves and their families twelve months on five pagodas (£1 15*s.*). The rent of land appears high or low, in a great measure in proportion to the stock employed in its cultivation: the whole lands of this country have not, I am convinced, one-third what they ought to have, and the culture of them is of course extremely defective; they do not

yield one-third of the produce which they ought to do, and the rent is therefore said to be high. Only a few farmers are able to bestow on their fields the highest degree of cultivation; many never weed them; a very great number never manure them; and many only plough them once, instead of four or five times. These last cry out against the rental, because it affords them only the wages of labour; but it is all that they are entitled to, for men without stock cannot in any part of the world expect to reap the advantages of it. To such men the lowest rent is oppressive, and to reduce it to meet their wishes would annihilate revenue altogether. The other classes of farmers pay their rents without difficulty, and gain something above the wages of labour, according to the quantity of their stock.

The liberty of throwing up land is equivalent to a reduction of assessment.

The regulations adopted in the current year for permitting them to throw up as much of their land as they please, as it increases the proportion of stock to cultivation, is nearly the same thing as reduction of rent; for the usage was, to make assessment as much upon stock as upon land, and to make the farmer who had ploughed twenty acres last year, pay the same this year, though he only ploughed ten, if his stock remained undiminished. This liberty of throwing up their lands was a great concession in their favour; but as their lands are still greatly under-stocked, and consequently unproductive, such an abatement of rent ought to be made as might facilitate their means of stocking them completely. It is only for the purpose of hastening the attainment of this object, that I think any reduction necessary; for there are some arguments against bringing rents to a very low standard.

It in the first place directly cuts off a part of the revenue, and it forces many of the head farmers to narrow the limits of their farms, from the loss of their labourers, whom it tempts to leave them in order to set up for themselves. In this way, also, there will be some decrease of revenue, because the labour of the servant on new land will not produce so much as it did on that of his master. But this decrease will not be lasting, for it will soon be made up by the extra labour of the new farmers, who, with the exception of a few of the most indolent, will do much more work on their own account than on that of another; by the increase of population, to which the division of lands and low rents are favourable; and by the multiplica-

tion of cattle, and every kind of farming stock, which is always better managed by small than by great farmers. Those men whose farms have been lessened by the desertion of their labourers, must principally depend upon the increase of their own families for hands to enlarge them to their former size, because, while rents are low, and while there are vast tracts of good land unoccupied, of which anybody may take whatever he wants, every man who can purchase a bullock will farm for himself; and this difficulty of obtaining labour will continue until all the lands which can easily be rendered productive, shall be brought into cultivation.

Still a reduction of assessment, by enabling the farmers to increase their stock, would be very beneficial to the country, and eventually to the revenue.

With regard to the probable effects of the survey assessment on the permanency of revenue, I have not the least doubt but that the amount of the rents of all the lands which may be occupied in the current year, may be collected without having to wait for any length of time. Any remission, therefore, made with the design of securing the realization of revenue, is unnecessary; but such important benefits will immediately accrue to the country, and at a future period to revenue itself, from facilitating the means of increasing the stock of the farmers, that I think it would be doing an injury to both not to remit fifteen per cent. of the lease assessment. This is apparently less than the twenty per cent. which I recommended in my letter of the 15th November, 1796; but it is in fact more, because I conceive that the advantages which the farmers will derive from the permission of relinquishing a part of their lands, and concentrating their stock upon a smaller quantity, will be at least equal to ten per cent.

Para. 7.—*Consequent cheapness of the land.*

Cheapness of land principally attributable to the poverty of the farmers.

The rental is not the sole cause, but only one among many others, of the cheapness of land. The cheapness is occasioned by the poverty of the inhabitants, which hinders them from stocking their lands, and drawing from them the produce which they would yield, if well cultivated. But it may be said that the rental is the cause of this inability. This is not, however, the case; for had not the exactions of Government and its servants, beyond the fixed rent, perpetually stripped the farmers of all their gains, numbers of them might now have been rich, and their lands might have yielded treble their present produce, and been of course so much more valuable. The cheapness is also occasioned by the insecurity of

property, arising from frequent wars and conquests, which render the possession of land precarious. It is occasioned by the manners of the farmers, whom a long experience of the violence of their rulers has made distrustful, and who therefore either squander or bury their gains, instead of employing them in the cultivation and improvement of their lands. It is occasioned by the high interest of money, which induces those who have it, to employ it in other channels which they think safer than farming. It is occasioned by the want of confidence in Government, which deters those who might be disposed to lay out their money in improving land, from doing so, from the apprehension that the rent may be raised : and it is occasioned by the great tracts of arable land which, for want of cultivation, remain in the hands of Government, ready to be given to whoever will take them. It is plain enough that, as long as these remain unoccupied, no other land can have any value, because no man will buy what he can get for nothing.

Poverty and high rent are much the same thing to the farmer, for both leave him only a small share of the produce; the one prevents him from making the land productive, the other takes the produce from him. If the rents of improved and unimproved land are proportionable to their produce, and if they are fixed, the situation of the farmer upon the unimproved is better than upon the improved lands, because he may hope by his industry to bring them to the same high state of culture, and to gain all the difference.

Poor as they are, the farmers gain more on their stock than men of other professions.

Almost the whole of the farmers of these districts are upon unimproved lands; and though their poverty makes their share of the produce smaller than it ought to be, yet it is plain that, after paying all expenses, they gain the usual profits of stock; for were not this the case, what is now employed in farming would soon be consumed. There is even great reason to believe that all, except those of the poorest class, gain more on their stock than men of any other profession. But though their gains were double or treble the usual profits of stock, it would not give land any value. Suppose the total produce of a farm three hundred rupees, the rent one hundred, all expenses and the ordinary profits of stock one hundred, and that the remaining one hundred is an extra profit; this would not make the farm saleable, because, as every farmer could make the same on his own, none of them would give

anything for it; but if there was a farm of equal rent, which, in consequence of wells or other improvements, yielded an extra profit of two hundred rupees, a small price would be given for it, but not equal to one year's purchase; because the purchaser could not be sure how much the rent might be raised the following year.

Want of fixity of assessment and want of confidence in the Government discourage improvement,

The want of fixed rents, by discouraging improvements, has hitherto prevented land from becoming of any value; and were they now fixed, it is probable that the want of confidence in Government, which has always hitherto prevailed, would for a long time continue to produce the same effect: it will deter merchants from employing any part of their capital in farming, even though the profits should be much greater than that of trade, because it exposes their property more to public view and to the exactions of revenue officials; for when they farm, they must, in order to do it to advantage, have a number of cattle and stores of grain, and they must lay out money in the improvement of their land. These are things that cannot be concealed, or withdrawn from the rapacity of Government. If they wish to save themselves by flight, they cannot easily remove their cattle or grain, and they must leave their land with whatever money they have sunk on its improvement.

and hinder merchants from investing in land.

But trading property, on the other hand, is little exposed to sight, is easily secreted or transferred, and thereby renders traders more capable than farmers of evading extortion. The want of confidence, therefore, tends to keep land cheap, not only by discouraging the farmers from improving, but also by hindering it from deriving any assistance from the capital of merchants or manufacturers. The rental is so far from being the sole cause of the cheapness of land, that, were it reduced one-half, the cheapness would still continue the same, so long as there should be any unoccupied arable land to be given away for nothing; and were even the whole arable land under cultivation, none could fetch any price until there was some surplus of stock; because no man will purchase unless he has, besides the stock of the old farm, a sufficiency for the new one.

Though the lowering of the assessments, by enabling the farmers to increase their stock, would accelerate the arrival of the period in which all the arable land would be occupied and become saleable, yet it is not to be imagined that this

purpose would soon be accomplished, for men must have property before they can buy; and in a country in which there are no wealthy farmers, no reduction of rent can suddenly create them. Were a reduction of fifteen per cent. to be allowed, and land, after a certain number of years, to become saleable, it is impossible to form any accurate estimate of what the Government share of the gross produce would then be; it would probably vary from one-third to one-tenth, according to the different degrees of culture bestowed on the land.

Para. 8.—*Smallness of the farms in general.*

The smallness of farms in general, attributable partly to the poverty of the inhabitants, and partly also to the facility of farming and to the cheapness of land.

One cause of this is the assessment, but a still stronger cause is the poverty of the inhabitants; to which may be added the facility of farming and the cheapness of land. High rents and poverty operate much in the same way against the enlargement of farms, by leaving little profit to the cultivator and preventing the accumulation of stock. When farms are small from these causes, they mark the distress of the country, but they are also small from opposite causes.

To commence farming in this country very little capital is required: the farmer makes his own hut, and has no occasion to expend a single rupee on any kind of building; all that he wants is a pair of bullocks, a plough, and a little grain; with these he begins, and generally succeeds in his undertaking. It is therefore obvious, that every advance towards improvement in the condition of the labouring peasantry tends to oppose the enlargement of farms, because, whenever labourers acquire any property, they will leave their masters and farm for themselves; and this will constantly happen, as long as land continues cheap, or as Government has plenty to give gratis to whoever demands it. There is also little doubt but that, in consequence of this desertion of labourers, the head farmers, in order to retain them, will augment their wages, and thus hasten what they wish to prevent.

Small farms conducive to the general increase of wealth.

If a price were put on all waste lands, it would, by checking this desertion, contribute to promote the enlargement of farms, and likewise the saleability of the lands in cultivation; but this measure, though it would be advantageous to the principal farmers, would be prejudicial to the body of the cultivators. There is no reason to regret that farms are

small,—it is better on every account, and for general wealth. It does not produce men of great fortunes and overgrown possessions, but it lessens the number of poor, and raises up everywhere a crowd of men of small, but of independent property, who, when they are certain that they will themselves enjoy the benefit of every extraordinary exertion of labour, work with a spirit of activity which would in vain be expected from the tenants or servants of great landholders. If the expense of collection be somewhat increased by the smallness of farms, it is amply repaid by the augmentation of revenue. There is also less danger of loss by outstanding balances, from small than from great farms; because the failure of the small farmer is for a trifling sum, is known at once, and can be easily remedied; but the great farmer will not stop payment until he has ruined every man under him, and rendered them incapable of paying their rents for a number of years.

The creation of large farms can only be accomplished by reducing the assessment in the case of a few favoured individuals, which would be unjust.

Were there any necessity for making great farmers, it could only be done by wronging all the petty farmers and diminishing revenue; for as there is no man in the country who has more stock than is barely sufficient for his own lands, if waste is given to him he cannot cultivate it. If other farmers are placed under him, it can be no use to him, unless a reduction of rent is granted, one part of which may go to him, and the other to them. Both will then be gainers; but as they were independent farmers as well as he, they will think, when Government consents to remit a part of the revenue, that they are entitled to the full proportion that falls to their respective lands, and that it is hard to be obliged to share it with him; and many of them even will not consider the remission obtained as an equivalent for being rendered dependent on an equal. It would indeed be extremely absurd to apply any portion of it to the purpose of enriching particular farmers, and raising them above their neighbours. If ever any is allowed, it ought to be distributed fairly among them all; every one ought to have just as much land as he can stock and cultivate himself; all of them ought to have the same advantages; and they ought to be left entirely to their own exertions, to extend or contract their farms, according to their various fortunes. There would probably in time be no country in the world which could boast of such a

numerous race of substantial middling farmers, whose condition, though inferior to that of British landholders, would certainly be preferable to that of the great bulk of the tenantry.

Para. 9.—*Constancy of change in the number and extent of farms, from necessity of augmenting and reducing them every year in proportion to the number of hands, &c.*

Changes in the number and extent of farms unavoidable, but not necessarily prejudicial to the revenue.

In a country where petty farmers are so numerous, changes must unavoidably happen among them, and the lands of some be diminished and of others increased, as long as they are subject to the usual vicissitudes of human affairs; but it does not of necessity follow that these interior alterations should materially affect the general amount of revenue, and if they do not, they are of no consequence. The loss from the decrease of some farms will generally be counterbalanced by the increase of others, and the total will thus be kept nearly on a level. The failures which occasion the reduction of farms arise from high rent, from poverty, from imprudence, and, above all, from the facility of farming, which tempts poor people to engage in it without sufficient means, who are often forced by the most trifling accidents to sell their cattle, and return to their former condition of labourers.

After a farmer has got a certain number of cattle, he has no occasion to be at any further expense on this head; for they multiply fast enough to enable him not only to keep up the stock, but also to sell some, and to make a quantity of ghī,* and from the produce to pay a considerable part of his rent. The farmer who has no cows, but only one or two pair of ploughing bullocks, must always include their price in the expense of cultivation, because, when any of them die, he can only replace them by purchase. But though the poorer classes of farmers, cultivating at a greater expense, are more liable to fail, and therefore cannot be so profitable to the State as the more substantial, it is no reason why they should be discouraged; for after all their failures, the aggregate produce of their industry is more than it would have been had they continued as servants. Were it not, they would not have left their masters; for men are not so ignorant as to persevere for any length of time in a pursuit in

* *Ghi*, clarified butter, which is largely used by the natives of India in cooking.

which the chances of success are not greater than those of failure. There will always be some losses, and consequently balances outstanding every year; and until land shall become saleable, Government must either remit them, or collect them by a second assessment upon the inhabitants.

Para. 10.—*Constraining all the ryots, without exception, to rent their farms a number of years, whether agreeable or not to their inclinations or interests, which is indispensable to settle a whole district in leases, &c.*

The system of leases might be generally introduced, without any measures of constraint, by reducing the assessment in favour of those accepting leases.

It depends entirely upon circumstances, whether a whole district may, or may not, be rented in lease without constraint. If the rent is lowered as much as every farmer wishes, there is no doubt but that the whole of them would be glad to take their lands in lease; if the rent is higher than this, but such as it is imagined they can pay without much inconvenience, all the more substantial farmers will prefer a lease, in order to secure themselves from further demands. The poorer sort, having nothing of this kind to fear, and being also apprehensive that losses may disable them from fulfilling their engagements, will prefer an annual settlement; but if they are told that those who do not agree to a lease must give up their lands, most of them will rather consent than relinquish them. This alternative may be considered as some degree of constraint; that is to say, it is violence to them to insist on retaining the power of making your own assessments. But the whole of a district might be settled in lease without even the least appearance of constraint; for were it published, that all who consented to take their lands for a certain number of years would obtain a remission of fifteen per cent., and that all who did not would be obliged to pay the usual rent, there is not a man in the country who would not agree to the lease. This shows that there is no absolute necessity for constraint. If the remission is made without any such condition annexed to it, the number of farmers desirous of a lease would not be thereby much augmented; for, as the circumstances that give a value to a lease are certainty of possession and security against any increase of rent,—if these also exist under an annual settlement, there is no cause to lead the farmer to prefer the lease, but several to make him prefer the annual settlement. This is precisely the state of things in this country. The farmers know that they may hold their lands as long as they choose,

A general reduction of assessment will not promote leases, so long as the ryots know that their tenure is practically permanent, and that the assessment is not likely to be increased.

and that their rents will never be raised. By this they have already all the benefits of a lease; but as, by not binding themselves, they have the chance of getting better lands than their own, by the death or failure of the former occupant, and are at liberty to take advantage of every opportunity that may offer of changing their situation for one more favourable, there is not one of them who will willingly accept of a lease. As long as they are convinced that there is no danger of a rise of rents at a future period, any present remission would only tend to confirm them in their opposition to a lease; for as they would think that the remission had been granted solely for the purpose of prevailing on them to agree to it, they would think that, by persisting in rejecting it, they would obtain a still further reduction.

The inhabitants of these districts have everywhere this year been released from the engagements into which they entered last. It would therefore be in vain to attempt at present to renew them; for, having already seen that they were set aside whenever it was suspected that they were unfavourable to them, they would imagine that the same indulgence would be shown again; and if they even agreed to leases, they would do it without reflection, and without any serious intention of abiding by their agreements longer than it suited their convenience. As there is, however, no likelihood that they will agree to a lease while rents remain unalterable, and as the privilege of throwing up whatever lands they please every year will render the amount of revenue uncertain, expedients might be adopted for introducing fixed settlements by degrees, which is all that is wanted; for the matter is not of so much importance as to make it necessary to hurry it forward.

The option of throwing up land annually enables them to adapt themselves to the seasons, and is beneficial to them, and ultimately to the revenue.

Though the farmers have the option of throwing up their lands, they will cultivate nearly the same quantity every successive year, and they will cultivate at last the same quantity as now, upon an average of years. In some particularly dry seasons they will give up a part of their dry lands, and all the wet under tanks that have not been filled; but this will seldom exceed five, and will probably never amount to ten, per cent., and will not, therefore, occasion any very material error in the estimates of revenue. This liberty, though attended with little loss to the public, is of wonderful service to the farmers, because it enables them to accommodate themselvse to

the seasons, and thus to save, in the natural way, that which, after much expense and labour of investigation, must necessarily have been wholly or in part remitted at last, or else collected by a second assessment, which, by keeping them poor, would impede the progress of cultivation and the future increase of revenue.

As the country improves, this option may be withdrawn.

In the present state of the country, it is right that this advantage should be continued to the inhabitants some time longer; but in proportion as their circumstances improve, it might be withdrawn, in order to render it more easy to ascertain accurately the probable amount of collections. The best way of doing it, I think, would be to publish that all farms not taken on lease would be given to whoever agreed to purchase them,—one year's rent for any particular field, or one half year's rent for the whole farm. All lands which, at the time of the lease, were underrated, and all which have been since improved, would be immediately taken on lease; the same would happen to all lands improved hereafter, to all that were worth six months' rent, and only those which were worthless would remain under an annual settlement. The lease would thus keep exact pace with the improvement, and would show, better than any investigation or accounts, the actual state of the country.

Para. 11.—*Constraining them, after that (however reduced in their circumstances), to perform such forced engagement, to make the settlement permanent.*

Engagements, once made, should be enforced.

I have already said that a lease may be made without any constraint; but if, by forced engagements, is meant the farmers' taking land on your terms, rather than give it up, I certainly think that they ought to be constrained to perform such forced engagement. No assessment, however low, would perfectly satisfy the farmers. The Collector must make it; and as it is to be supposed that he has considered their ability to pay it, he must insist on the fulfilment of agreements; for, did the farmers imagine that a remission would be granted for every accident, they would not pay half their rents.

The lease settlement might have been made permanent.

As the lease settlement has been done away with, it is now of little use to discuss it; but had it been followed up, it might have been made permanent, though not upon the very same lands: the failures in one quarter would have been made up by extra cultivation in another. Where villages are so widely

scattered, and so small, consisting often of only four or five huts, and where many of them are in jungles, where the inhabitants are frequently swept away by sickness, and where nobody will go to supply their place, it is impossible, by any means whatever, to draw always the same rent from the same lands; but the same rents might always be drawn from the same district, under the lease; the deficiencies caused by land being uncultivated, from death or misfortunes, might have been remitted; the same stock still in the country, that of the farmers who had failed was in other hands, but was still productive, and, along with the natural increase of that of the more fortunate farmers, would have yielded a produce, but on other lands, equal to the deficiency: if greater, the excess would have been added to revenue; if less, the difference must either have been raised by a second assessment, or remitted.

Para. 12.—*Necessity of remissions, even under annual settlements, when their farms are proportioned to their circumstances, &c.*

Remissions not absolutely necessary under an annual settlement.

Where farmers are so numerous, failures must happen, under every kind of settlement; but it does not appear that remissions are absolutely necessary under annual settlements. As the farmers have the power of throwing up their lands, and keep only such as they can easily cultivate, their losses in any one year can seldom be very great. If they are unable to discharge their several balances, it will not bear very heavily on the country to levy them by a second assessment; it would be needless, therefore, to grant any remission under annual rents, except on some extraordinary occasion, such as a war, or the total loss of the crops.

If the lease settlement is too high, there will be numerous failures; and as the contributions to discharge them will distress the other farmers, they will accumulate from year to year, and at last render large remissions unavoidable. But this will not happen if the assessment is moderate; for the very idea of moderate implies that the gain must exceed the loss, and the increase the decrease of cultivation, and of course, that revenue will not fall. If a deficiency happens from the failure of a detached farmer in a remote situation, the loss will be compensated by increase in other quarters; if it happens in a large village, the other farmers will be able to make it good without distressing themselves. There is no foundation for

believing that losses will accumulate; but if they did, it would not be in so great proportion as the gains, and would not, therefore, bring revenue below its level. It does not necessarily follow, that because they happen in a village one year, they must again occur there, to the same or to greater amount, every succeeding year; for if a timely remission is granted to the defaulters, though not to the village or district, it is probable that many of them will recover themselves the ensuing season, and be able to pay their rents as usual. There would therefore be a revenue, not only secure from a defalcation, but also continually increasing, though not on the same lands; and there would therefore be no positive necessity, after whatever length of time, for making any remission on the total of the lease settlement.

Land revenue defaulters should not be deprived of their ploughing cattle.

It may be a question to what extent demands against defaulters ought to be carried, and whether or not their whole property, as far as it will go, should be applied to discharge their debts. I should think it best never to carry the rigour of exaction so far as to deprive them of their ploughing-cattle; because they, as servants, will not be so productive as when working for themselves, and because the sale of their cattle would not, in general, yield so much as this difference of produce, and would therefore, in the end, be a loss to the other farmers, who are every year to pay up the deficiency occasioned by their failure.

The objection to leaving them in possession of their cattle is, that it would encourage them to conceal their property and exaggerate their losses; but this would be obviated by always requiring that the balance should be made up by the remaining farmers, who, in order to save themselves, would make it their business to discover the truth. Though, upon this principle, if strictly adhered to, there would be no remissions, yet it might be proper to keep up the custom of always granting a few, but within a small limited sum; for the practice of doing it renders the manager of the country acquainted with the circumstances of the inhabitants, and qualifies him to judge, in times of public calamity, when it becomes unavoidable, how far it ought to be extended, which, if he had not learned from experience, he might at once, upon misrepresentations, and without any cause, remit a greater sum than the amount of all his former savings.

Para. 13.—*Want of landed security, because the land in general, not yielding any profits of stock, under the present assessments, it is worth nothing, &c.*

I have already stated the reasons why land is not saleable, and why it is therefore no security for defalcations; it is not, however, because it does not yield any profits of stock under the present assessment. It might yield the full profits of stock, and still be of no value as security; for, besides all these profits, it must yield an overplus as rent, before it can become saleable; and it is only in proportion to this overplus, that it can be worth anything as security. It is not easy to believe that it does not at present yield the profits of stock, for it certainly must yield the profits of all that is employed upon it; because, if it did not, this stock could not be kept up, and would either be consumed or withdrawn. If profits are small, it may be imputed as much to the poverty of the people as to the rate of assessment; for as their stock is usually inadequate to giving their lands even a tolerable degree of culture, great returns cannot reasonably be expected.

Land is of no value as security so long as it is not saleable.

Para. 14.—*The consequent necessity of making securities pay up the rent of defaulters and absentees, which is hard; or obliging the ryots of the village jointly to pay them, which is unjust.*

It has been before observed, that a lease settlement, agreeable to the present assessment, cannot be permanent, unless individual losses are collected from the great body of the farmers. With respect to the hardship or injustice of such a measure, it does not seem to be harder that a farmer should pay for the failure of a person for whom he has stood security, than that a tradesman or a merchant should do the same. It is also hard for a man to be obliged to pay his own losses; but neither the one hardship nor the other has anything peculiar in themselves, but are common to every condition in life. The person for whom the security is given is often merely the labourer of the farmer, who receives his wages, and has nothing to do with the produce of the land. In this instance, when a loss occurs, the farmer, in the character of a security, is only paying for himself; but the greater part of farmers are so ignorant, so simple, and so little accustomed to security transactions, that it is impossible to

There is no hardship in making the ryots of a tract of country jointly responsible for the assessment.

impress them with a proper sense of their nature, or by any warning to deter them from becoming bound for much more than they can pay themselves, on account of men who, they are certain, will fail. For this reason, I think that no individual security should ever be taken for rent, except where the security has an interest in the engagement, as in the case of a father for a son, or one partner for another. There is not the same objection to general securities, or to whole districts becoming responsible for the amount of their rent, and they ought certainly to be adopted, as, without them, there can be no dependence on the permanency of revenue. As to their being unjust, it is not at all clear in what light they can be considered as such. If it be not unjust to raise a land-rent to answer the demands of Government, or even to increase this rent on particular emergencies, it cannot surely be regarded as more unjust to collect the deficiencies of the fixed revenue by a second assessment. The increase of revenue and the levy of the deficiency are both taxes of the same nature to the inhabitants,—they are somewhat more than they had expected to have been called upon for; but as they are raised by a measure which has no partiality in its operation, but is the same to all men, they may be disagreeable, they may be even oppressive, but they cannot be deemed unjust.

Para. 15.—*Removal of head farmers and increase of small ones, consequences of reducing the profits of farming, &c.*

As a rule, head farmers with tenant farmers under them have not existed in this country, there having been no property in land and no fixed assessment.

Small farms are increased by cheapness of land and facility of farming; and though head farmers are certainly diminished by high rents, it does not appear that this has been the cause in this country, or, even if it had, that, if no other consequence has followed, any harm has been done. If by head farmers we are to understand men holding large tracts of ground from Government, which, not being able to cultivate all themselves, they let in part to other men, who cultivate with their own stock and pay them a rent, if the increase of rent were carried so far as, upon the under farms, to equal both the share of Government and the rent to these head farmers, they could no longer remain as head farmers, because, the under farms being now of no value, they would give them up; but the under farmers, paying no more than usual, would cultivate the same lands as before, and both they

and the head farmers would just occupy as much as they could respectively manage with their own stock. If the advantages thus lost had always been enjoyed by the head farmers, the taxation which abolished them might be considered as extremely oppressive; but I have never been able to discover that any such race of head farmers ever existed in this country; indeed it was impossible, from the nature of things, that they could. There was no property in land, no fixed rent; whoever gave most for a field got it; demands rose with improvement, every man was obliged to pay as much as he could; and as Government had plenty of land to give away, it is evident that those only could be head farmers who had lands to give to under farmers at a lower rent than the waste of Government, a circumstance that could scarcely ever happen excepting through the collusion of the revenue farmers. It did, however, sometimes happen, but was confined to the few who were useful to them as agents in raising extra collections, &c.; but as these head farmers were merely temporary, depending entirely on the favour of their friends in the cutcherry,* seldom preserving their situations and advantages of low rents more than a few years, and never for life, it may be said that there never was any class of head farmers in these districts; and as there are none now, it is neither the interest of Government, nor of the people in general, that they should be established. The fair mode of settlement is, that rents should be equal to all men, and that every man should just have as much land as he can cultivate with his own stock. If rents are everywhere equal—that is to say, proportioned to the nature of soil—there can be no head farmers, however low rents may be, while any arable land remains unoccupied, because every man who has stock will take land from Government for himself. If there are no head farmers, and if rents are equal, a proportional augmentation of them will not increase the number of small farmers, but will rather tend to oppose it, by increasing the expense of farming, and thereby rendering it more difficult for the servants of farmers to obtain a sufficient stock, in order to leave their masters and set up for themselves. It therefore appears, that when rents

* Cutcherry—properly kachēri—the office of the Collector or chief authority in the district.

are equal, head farmers are not always increased by their being low, or small farmers by their being high.

Para. 16.—*The necessity that this involves of Government conducting the affairs of husbandry by prescribed and fixed rules, which, not applying to all times and circumstances, are detrimental to agriculture, &c.*

The casual evils which may result from the interference of Government officials in a country cultivated by a number of small farmers, holding direct from the State, not so great as those to be apprehended from dividing the country among a few great landholders.

Government does not meddle with the affairs of husbandry further than collecting the rents. It, however, may be said that in doing this from such a number of individuals, its ignorance of their circumstances is often hurtful to agriculture, by making it exact payment where remission ought to have been granted; but that the head farmers, being fully acquainted with the condition of all those under them, would proportion indulgence to the extent of their various misfortunes. It is not certain that they would always make the proper use of their knowledge, and if they did, it would not, after all, make it advisable that the country should be rented by them; for the casual and temporary evils which might arise from the ignorance of the servants of Government, would be nothing in comparison to the lasting injury which the country would sustain from being divided among great landholders.

Para. 17.—*The loss which must be generally felt by the petty farmers or labouring poor in times of scarcity from the want of the head farmers, who used to supply them with grain.*

Poverty likely to be increased under a system of great farms.

Great farmers are more likely to produce poverty than to relieve it, for in proportion as they increase, small farmers decrease, by being converted into labourers. Though there are properly no great farmers in this country, there are many who are something similar to them. These men, when a poor farmer has not stock enough to cultivate his farm, supply the deficiency, on condition of receiving a share of the produce; but their terms are either originally so hard, or afterwards rendered so by taking usurious advantage of his inability or want of punctuality, that these contracts most frequently terminate in their getting possession of all his little stock, and even insisting on his working for them until he discharges—which he probably never will—some real or pretended balance that they have contrived to accumulate against him. His labour is now so much more profitable to them than to himself, that in times of scarcity they will supply him with

grain, and endeavour to preserve him, for the same reason that they wish to preserve their cattle. This is merely what often takes place under all governments, but more especially under those which are arbitrary and rapacious. The great farmers, being uncertain how long they may hold their lands, have no motive for improving them, and still less for being anxious about those of the under farmer; and though they may know that his future prosperity would be beneficial to themselves, they seldom have patience to make the experiment, but follow the shorter road of making the most of him for the present. They feed him when in want, but they prevent him from becoming independent and able to feed himself. Wherever a country is divided among great farmers, the poor are numerous, because there are then only two classes,—rich proprietors and poor labourers. The more the lands are divided among small farmers who have the means of cultivating them, and the fewer the number of great farmers, the fewer also will be that of the labouring poor, and the less the necessity of supplying them with grain in times of scarcity.

Para. 18.—*Increase of public revenue, which is a lakh* (£10,000) *more than Tippoo's village rental of* 1788-9, *when it was higher than it had ever been before, &c.*

Assessment of the districts under Munro's charge not greater than it was in former years, but still higher than it ought to be.

The public revenue of the centre division of these districts is not greater now than it has been in former times; it was as high in other years, under Tippoo, as in 1788-9; and has been higher still at earlier periods. But even taking 1788-9, it is not higher now than it was then. The rental of that year, by the village accounts, was as follows:—

	Land-rent.	Inâms.	Land-rent and Inams.	Customs, &c.	Grand Total.
	£	£	£	£	£
Settlement ...	56,852	4,628	61,480	3,997	65,477
Collections ...	50,124	4,628	54,752	3,963	58,715
Balances ...	6,728	...	6,728	34	6,762

The balance of land-rent here is a false balance, for the whole settlements, and even more, were collected from the farmers. In these settlements are included lands, amounting to 9000 pagodas (£3150), given to the kandáchárs, or militia,

at a low rent, in lieu of pay. These lands, at the usual rates of assessment, now yield near treble their former rent; but taking them at double, it makes an addition of 9000 pagodas (£3150) to the land-rent of 1788-9. To this might also be added the rents of the circar lands formerly entered as ináms, but now resumed, and of lands greatly underrated, and more frequently free of all rent, enjoyed by the revenue servants or their connections, some resident in the country, and some not, who contributed nothing to revenue, but drew the full rent from the cultivators. These might amount, at a low estimate, to 3000 pagodas (£1050); so that the total land-rent of that year was 174,433 pagodas (£61,052).

The collections of land-rent last year, including lands not entered in the jamábandi,* were 167,000 pagodas (£58,450), which is higher than the settlement of 1788-9, but rather less than the actual collections of that year, when the deductions for militia and other lands are added to the account. It may be said that the profits on lands held by revenue servants, being generally spent in the country, were of advantage to it. This they certainly were in some degree, but as they were scarcely ever appropriated to the improvement of land, they could only be of use to agriculture in the same way that so much money would have been, if issued as pay to troops, by increasing the demand for the productions of the soil. But even in this view, the disbursements to the present civil and military establishments are greater than they were under Tippoo, added to the peculations of all his cutcherry servants. The peculations, or by whatever name they may be called, the extra profits of curnums and potails,† above what they now receive, were those only which could be said to afford the cultivator any direct benefit superior to what he now possesses. But even of these, only a small portion was applied to the

* *Jamábandi.*—This term appears here to be applied to the village rent-roll, *i.e.* the register or statement of the village holdings assessed to the public revenue, and the amount of the assessment. It is commonly applied to the *process* of settling the amount of land revenue payable for the year, which process, it may be remarked, is often misunderstood as involving, under the ryotwár system, as in force in Madras, an annual settlement of the *rate* of assessment, the fact being that all that is settled is the quantity of land which each ryot undertakes to cultivate and his consequent liability to the State.

† *Potail*—properly *pātil*—the head man of the village, who, besides being invested with petty authority as a magistrate, is the principal agent in the realization of the revenue, and the chief medium of communication between the ryots and the officers of Government.

purposes of agriculture; the rest, from the dread of its bringing on the possessor the reputation of wealth, was either buried, or squandered in pagoda-feasts, shows, and marriages. There can be no doubt but that this is the case, for there is scarcely a substantial curnum or potail in the country, and they are in general as poor as the other farmers, and often more so, from the effect of past extortion. It appears, therefore, that as much rent was drawn from the great mass of cultivators under Tippoo, as at present, and, though less was carried to the public account, that the balance retained in the country did not afford any immediate relief to the lower orders of the farmers, or any permanent advantage to the higher, beyond what they now enjoy. Were it even admitted that the former was a lakh under the present rental of Salem, it would be no proof that the condition of the inhabitants was better; for when there was no fixed rule or period of collection, no security of property, and when any exertion of industry was discouraged by never-ceasing exactions from every man who had anything to give, and often by imprisonment and punishment, to extort imaginary concealed treasure, it might have been more distressing to the country to pay the smaller sum, than it is now to pay the larger. The present rental will, however, now no longer exceed the former, either in fact or even by a comparison of accounts; for the option given to the farmers of throwing up one part of their lands, without raising the rent of the other, as was then the custom, will probably reduce it to the level of what it appears to have been in 1788–9, by the false statements of the curnums. But though I see no reason to believe that the actual collections from the country have ever been higher under the Company's Government than at earlier periods, I still think that they ought to be diminished.

Para. 19.—*Consequent extension of Government's interest in agriculture, which gives it a greater property in the produce than any other government has been known to have, &c.*

The public assessment, and, in the case of tenants, the rent payable to head farmers, should be entitled to a preference over other debts.

I imagine that every government in India demands as great a share of the produce as Government does here. The observation is very just, that an increase of taxation increases the difficulty of recovering lawful debts, for it diminishes the means that the debtor has of discharging them; but it does not seem so clear that Government, having a large or a small

number of farmers to deal with, should make any alteration on this head; for it never can be the interest of any government to impede the course of justice in the recovery of legal debts. The only possible case in which numerous farms held immediately of Government could interfere with justice, might be when a revenue servant might hinder a creditor from recovering a just claim, from the mistaken notion that it might injure revenue, by disabling the debtor from paying his rent. But it is plain that a preference of the public to private interests could never dictate such a conduct, because, if the creditor is a farmer or a merchant of the country, his losing the money, or the debtor's paying it, would have nearly the same effect on revenue; and if a stranger, the distrust which it would create, the difficulty of borrowing which would ensue, and the consequent rise of the rate of interest, would occasion infinitely more mischief to the country, and loss to revenue, than could have been counterbalanced by the temporary advantage of realizing the rents of the debtor; but lenders might advance their money with the same confidence to the immediate tenants of Government as to those of head farmers, were it published that the same rule of recovery would be observed in both cases. It might then become a question whether Government, or, what would be the same thing, head farmers, should, on the failure of their tenants, share only in proportion with other creditors, or should first seize effects for the amount of the rents, before the creditors could be entitled to any division. It would probably be best that rents should always be paid before the admission of other claims. This is generally understood at present, and the lender does not regard the rent, but the overplus, as that which constitutes his security for the debt; he knows how far his right extends, and has no reason to complain if he is not allowed to go farther. And it is, perhaps, on the whole, as well for him that it should be so; for if the landlord found that the rents of his tenant could be seized by a creditor, he would give the land to another man, and by doing so deprive the tenant of the only means of his paying his debts.

Para. 20.—*Multiplication of labour, which such an extension of Government's concerns occasions to its servants, and which must increase demands upon the Collector's time, or oblige him to delegate authority to others.*

If assessments are so high as to be oppressive, the collection of them will be difficult, and will therefore occupy the whole of the Collector's time; but if they are moderate, it would make very little difference to his time, whether he has to demand them from a few great farmers, or from many thousand small ones, as at present. It would employ a few more accountants, but would scarcely give him any additional trouble. When lands are held immediately of him, the grants are all of the same form, the conditions of all are exactly similar, and as they are perfectly well known, there are rarely any disputes or references about them, so that, however great the number of farmers, they seldom take up any extraordinary part of his time, except when they apply for remissions. But were the country portioned out among great farmers, the endless variety of their agreements with their tenants—for personal service, for rent, for kind, or for a part of both; sometimes merely verbal, or, if written, written in different forms, often confusedly expressed, and of doubtful meaning—would give rise to such continual disputes and complaints, as would probably give him more trouble than he could have suffered from giving the lands to small farmers. To guard against this, the great farmers might be required to adopt certain specific forms in drawing out their agreements with their tenants; but the very endeavour to introduce this practice, and the perpetual attention which would be necessary to keep it in force, would occupy as much of his time as if the whole had been transacted in his own cutcherry. In these districts it is not the number of small farms, but the want of any fixed system of management, changing a part or a whole of it every year, and the details connected with the survey, which have hitherto created so much labour for the Collector. When changes are at an end, and a fixed plan determined upon, though farms should remain as small as at present, the discharge of every part of his duty will demand no very extraordinary degree of application.

The system of small farms does not necessarily entail more labour on the revenue officials than the system of large farms.

Para. 21.—*Inefficacy of delegated authority, from the want of moderation, zeal, or ability, and oftener from the abuse of it; which indicates that the conduct of agriculture should be left to the husbandman, who can yield to all times, &c.*

The conduct of agriculture, so far as regards every man's having the management of his own farm, should certainly not

The delegation of authority to

native subordinates is unavoidable.

be interfered with by the revenue servants; but if, by leaving it to the husbandman, it is meant that farmers should have whole districts, or villages, or even any portion of land beyond what they can stock themselves, under their charge, reasons have already been given for thinking that such a system would be extremely prejudicial to the general welfare of the country. As to the evils of delegated authority, it may be said that they must always exist; the Collector cannot do everything himself, nor is it necessary that he should: were he to lose himself in detail, a single village would be as much as he could manage, and the revenue would be swallowed up in the expense of collection. There are men enough among the natives, who are better acquainted with the state of the country and the manners of the people, and who are better qualified to carry on the details of revenue, to detect imposition, and to investigate to the bottom, and settle all disputes and litigations, than any European ever can be. It is his business, not so much to lose his time to no purpose, in the vain attempt to do everything, as to make those do work who can do it better than himself.

The separation of judicial from executive authority not desirable in the circumstances of India.

With respect to the separation of the judicial from other powers, it may be doubted if it would produce any good. One of the strongest arguments against the union of the judicial and executive functions, that the administration of justice may thereby be converted into an engine for destroying the liberties of the people, has no existence in this country. The people are already under a foreign dominion, and can look for nothing more than the preservation of their own laws and customs, so far as they are compatible with the security of the authority of that Government. It would be impossible to communicate to them all the advantages of English jurisprudence, without first making them Englishmen. Were native courts of justice established in each province, their decisions would be partial and corrupt. Were European judges appointed to superintend them, they, as being also officers of Government, could have no more inducement to guard the people from wrong than the collector; and the nature of their office precluding them from acquiring so intimate a knowledge of the people, would render them, on most occasions, more liable than him to be deceived in their judgments. There is yet but little property in the country to go

to law about,—litigations are chiefly about the boundaries of fields, stray cattle, and the wages of the farmers' servants, or the shares of their partners; and as they are connected with revenue, they could no way be so easily or so expeditiously settled as by the Collector and his tahsildárs,* or by pancháyats† under their direction. It would be proper to have a superior court to appeal to from the decisions of the Collector, and to complain against him, when guilty of any act of oppression; but it should not interfere with the interior management of his district. The whole authority, civil and judicial, should be vested in him; for if a court of justice is established in his district, the expense of government will be greatly increased, and the collections of the revenue impeded, without the smallest benefit to the people.

Resumé of suggestions made in this letter and in the letter of 18th July.

I have now fully stated my sentiments on your different queries, and shall proceed, by combining the result of them with what I have said in my letter of the 18th July last, to deliver my opinion as to the best mode of forming a permanent settlement of the revenue of this country. The lease founded upon this survey, having been abandoned, cannot possibly, for many reasons, be re-established as before. Its duration, of only one year in most districts, and two in a few, was of too brief a date to admit of any accurate estimate being formed of its probable consequences. It appeared most likely, however, that, though the settlements might always have been realized, yet the condition of the inhabitants would have been little bettered without a considerable reduction in them. The great point in making a settlement is the rate of assessment; all other regulations connected with it are of very inferior importance. It needs no arguments to show, that the lower it is, the better for the farmers. I have proposed such an abatement as, when the cheapness of cultivation and the great returns from the seed are taken into consideration, will be found to leave them in possession of as great advantages as any race of husbandmen in the world. It must not, however, from this be inferred that land will become saleable on a sudden; for the frontier situation of these districts, and other reasons, must long prevent it from generally attaining any value at all, and perhaps for ever from

* *Tahsildár*, a native collector of revenue.

† *Pancháyat*, a court of arbitration, usually composed of five persons.

attaining that value which it bears in Europe. The plan which, it appears to me, would be best calculated to secure to the people the fruits of their industry, and to Government a permanent revenue, is comprised under the following heads:—

1. A reduction of fifteen per cent. to be made on the lease assessment.

2. The country to be rented immediately of Government by small farmers, as at present, every one receiving just as much land as he demands.

3. Settlements to be annual; that is to say, every man to be permitted to give up, or take, whatever land he pleases every year.

4. Every man to have a part, or the whole, of his lands in lease, who wishes it; and in order to encourage the application for leases, all lands held under annual tenures to be taken from the occupants and given to such other farmers as may demand them in lease, on their paying to Government, as purchase-money, one year's rent for any particular field, or one half-year's rent for the whole farm.

5. Villages and districts to be responsible for all individual failures.

6. All lands included in the lease should remain invariably at the rent then fixed, after the proposed reduction of fifteen per cent.

7. All lands not included in the lease should be rented at the average of the village to which they belong.

8. Lands included in the lease, being given up and allowed to be waste for any number of years, should, when again occupied, pay, the very first year, the full rent as before.

9. All castes, whether natives or aliens, to pay the same rent for the same land.

10. No additional rent ever to be demanded for improvements. The farmer who, by digging a well, or building a tank, converts dry land into garden or rice fields, to pay no more than the original rent of the ground.

11. No reduction of the established rent ever to be allowed, except where the cochineal plant, mulberry, &c., are cultivated.

THE CONDITION AND ASSESSMENT OF CANARA.*

31st May, 1800.

Unsettled condition of Canara when Munro took charge.

When I entered Canara from the southward in July last, the districts of Kúmla and Vítil, lying between Bekal and

* Canara is the name of an extensive tract of country on the western coast of India, extending from the northern frontier of the province of Malabar to the southern frontier of the Portuguese territory of Goa, which formed a portion of the territory acquired by the East India Company's Government under the Treaty of Seringapatam. It now forms two districts, one of which, under the designation of North Canara, and including a portion of the ancient kingdoms of Súnda and Bilgi, was transferred to the Bombay Presidency in 1862. The whole tract, as originally made over to the British Government, was estimated to contain a superficial area of 8360 square miles, of which 2744 square miles form a portion of the chain of mountains commonly known as the Western Ghâts, while the remainder lies between the mountains and the sea. The following description of the physical features of the district is extracted from an article in the *Calcutta Review*, written by Mr. Francis Newcome Maltby, of the Madras Civil Service, who was for some years Collector of Canara:—

'Canara Payanghât consists, for the 'most part, of a series of rough undu- 'lations of laterite rock, intersected 'by numerous streams and broad estu- 'aries. To the ravines and valleys 'formed by these streams, and to the 'sandy or alluvial soils which surround 'the estuaries, or form the coast line, 'cultivation is principally confined. It 'is only very gradually that it is ex- 'tending up the slopes of the hills on 'the coast. Possessing in these valleys 'a fertile soil, continually renewed 'from its well-wooded mountains, the 'district abounds in the richest pro- 'ductions of tropical vegetation. It 'has its sandy sea-board lined with 'cocoa-nuts, its alluvial plains bearing 'their treble crop of rice and rich 'patches of sugar-cane, and its deep 'ravines at the foot of the mountains 'crowded with pepper, cardamom, and 'betel palm. But in addition to these, 'the mountains rising from this base 'attain, in several places, a sufficient 'altitude to display the vegetation of a 'temperate climate, and the teak, ebony, 'and sandal which clothe their base, 'give place to the raspberry, the salop, 'the wild rose, and the violet. Inter- 'mediate between these is a plateau 'on which wheat grows by the side of 'the rice and the sugar-cane.

'The continued rains of the S.W. 'monsoon, averaging about 120 inches 'a year, combined with a tropical sun, 'clothe each successive range with ever 'varied forms of vegetable life, and to 'the botanist the district offers a 'boundless and almost unexplored field. 'To the geologist also it offers many 'points of interest, and the sources of 'the golden grains found in the sands 'of the mountain torrents, the laterite 'rock, the slate and the limestone, have 'hitherto been very cursorily examined. 'The scenery of the district is varied 'and beautiful. The estuaries of the 'coast are, in fact, broad salt-water 'lakes, studded with wooded islands, 'and surrounded by fertile alluvial

Mangalore, were in the possession of two chiefs styling themselves Rajahs, who had long been pensioners of the Bombay

'plains, from which rise the undulating 'laterite hills, backed by the long 'waving hue of the Ghát mountains. 'Passing from the coast to the interior, 'each depression in the laterite range 'is found to be a sequestered valley, 'the basin of which is occupied by rice 'fields, surrounded by gardens of cocoa-'nuts, plantain, betel palm, and pepper 'vine. The thatched homestead of the 'proprietor appears among this thick 'vegetation, and scattered huts of his 'tenants and dhers (late slaves) are 'surrounded by their clumps of garden 'trees.

'A belt of forest clothes the undu-'lating surface at the foot of the 'mountain range, and in travelling 'from the coast this has to be passed 'before the ascent is commenced. In 'ascending from this level the timber be-'comes finer, the rocks are more abrupt, 'the torrents become waterfalls, and 'all the features of mountain scenery 'are met with in their grandest form. 'In the south of the district the west-'ward streams take their rise on the 'westward slope only of the mountains, 'and are but small detached torrents, 'until they unite into rivers at the 'base of the mountains. The Cavery, 'as described above, and the Túnga, 'and the Badra, take their source in 'the mountains, and drain off to the 'eastward all that falls on the eastern 'slope. In the north of the district 'it is different; rivers which have col-'lected the great body of the water 'on the eastern slopes, swelled by the 'drainage of an extensive tableland, 'have found a passage through the 'mountains westward. They burst 'the rocky barriers at a great elevation, 'and form, perhaps, the noblest falls in 'the world. Of these the falls of Gair-'sappa are the best known, and have, 'for some time past, attracted visitors 'from all parts of India. A scene more 'perfect in the combination of sub-'limity and beauty is perhaps nowhere 'to be met with than is afforded by the 'stupendous chasm of 890 feet, its 'dashing cataracts, and all the acces-'sories of the most beautiful surround-'ing scenery.

* * * * *

'Canara Balaghát, or the tract 'above the Gháts, differs essentially 'from the coast district. It consists of 'the undulating crests of the moun-'tains, gradually subsiding to the level 'of the Deccan. The magnificent 'jungle of the Gháts gradually dwin-'dles into stunted teak and sál, and 'finally disappears into the open plains 'of the Mahratta frontier. The scat-'tered houses and farms are exchanged 'for clustered villages; and the double 'hedge which encloses them, and the 'towers of refuge which rise in their 'centre, show that the border track 'came within the sweep of the mounted 'marauders. The taluk of Súpa, ex-'tending from the semi-circular frontier 'of Goa to the east and south, consists 'of a vast forest in which a few higher 'and grassy elevations rise like far 'scattered islands. Cultivation is car-'ried on in the deeper and well-watered 'glens, but seen from an elevation the 'shadows of the clouds seem to float 'over an uninterrupted sea of foliage. 'More than a million of acres are com-'prised within this taluk, in which are 'included the grand forests, abounding 'in teak and other valuable woods. To 'the southward the jungle is less con-'tinuous, and a mixture of grassy 'glades and clumps of woodland forms 'the characteristic of the Bilgi taluk.

'Canara is almost exclusively an 'agricultural country. The staple pro-'ducts are rice, betelnut, pepper, car-'damoms, cocoa-nuts, and timber. The 'climate is unfavourable to manufac-'tures, and unless the production of 'salt, by solar evaporation, be included 'under this head, they may be said 'to be unknown. But though not a 'manufacturing country, it is emin-'ently a commercial one. Beyond the 'line of the Gháts lie the fertile lands 'of Dhárwár, Ballári, and Mysore, and 'the products of these countries find 'their way to the larger markets of 'the world through the ports of 'Canara.'

This district, which had for several centuries been subject to the Hindu dynasty of Vijayanagar, and subsequently to that of Bednore, was conquered by Hyder Ali in 1763, and remained a province of Mysore until the death of Tippoo, in 1799, when it was transferred to British rule and its administration was entrusted to Munro. His first duty was to ascertain what the Government dues were, and to take steps for enforcing their collection. The two papers on Canara printed in this volume are the reports addressed by him to the Board of Revenue at Madras, stating the result of his inquiries. The first of these

Government. Jamalábád had refused to surrender. A great part of the country, from Niléshwaram to Bárkúr, had been

reports shows what difficulties he had to contend with, and how by patient firmness they were overcome. It shows how, by a careful examination of ancient records, he traced the regulations and customs which had prevailed with reference to the tenure of land from the middle of the 14th century, when Canara was subject to the government of the Rajah of Vijayanagar, and when the assessment of the land revenue, which still formed the basis of the assessment which Munro found in operation, was introduced; how the Vijayanagar assessment, which was a light one, having been apparently considerably less than one-fourth of the gross produce, had rendered the district prosperous, and had led to the formation of that which did not exist in any of the neighbouring countries, except Malabar, viz. private property in land; how, when the country passed under the Bednore dynasty in the latter part of the 16th century, the assessment was more than once raised, but was still not so high as materially to interfere with the prosperity of the people, until the conquest of Canara by Hyder Ali, under whom, and under his son and successor Tippoo Sultan, there ensued a period of over-assessment, of war, and of misgovernment, which in some cases annihilated the old proprietors, and inflicted serious injury on all. It appears from a statement appended to the letter of 31st May, which it is not thought necessary to reprint here, that while Tippoo's assessment amounted to star pagodas 6,16,089-2-20, or £246,435, the assessment recommended by Munro did not exceed star pagodas 4,65,148-33-64, or £186,059. This assessment included the shist, the nature of which will be explained presently, and a portion of the additions made by the Bednore Government and by Hyder and Tippoo, which are commonly designated as shāmil. The Vijayanagar assessment, introduced between the years 1334 and 1347, including additions made to it up to the year 1660, constituted the rekhá, or standard assessment, and amounted to star pagodas 5,80,759-22-15. From this sum large deductions were made on account of ináms, waste lands, &c., which reduced the actual assessment to star pagodas 2,46,623-14-12. This latter sum, styled the shist or balance, was in fact the standard assessment in 1660. It was raised by the Bednore Government, by various additions, to star pagodas 3,20,827-4-73, at which it stood when Hyder conquered Canara. It was further raised by Hyder to star pagodas 5,33,202-4-17, and by Tippoo nominally to 8,68,678-25-16, but, according to Munro, actually to only 6,16,678-25-16; and in regard to the latter sum, it appears from a subsequent report by Mr. Thackeray (printed as an appendix to the Fifth Report) that it was merely a nominal assessment, for Tippoo never collected more than 4,73,550-3-12. Munro observes that 'the ancient assessment 'is still written, not only in all general 'accounts of districts, but in those of 'every individual landowner. It is alone 'considered as the due of Government. 'All subsequent additions are regarded 'as oppressive exactions. They are 'not called rent, but are stigmatized by 'the names of chout, imposts, fines, '&c., and distinguished by the names 'of the díwáns who first levied them.' The ancient assessment referred to in this passage would seem to be the shist of 1660, amounting, as above stated, to star pagodas 2,46,623-14-12; but in the figured statement the shist is entered in one place at 3,20,827-4-73, in another at 3,27,159-7-62, and in another at 3,59,732-32-35—all of these figures evidently including additions to the ancient shist made by the Bednore Government; while in the abstract of Munro's settlement for 1799, the standard rent or shist is put down at 2,84,604-28-45, which sum is referred to by Mr. Thackeray as the amount of the 'ancient shist.' The discrepancy is not now of any material importance, and I merely refer to it because the shist, as forming an element in the assessment of Canara, has been recently brought prominently to notice in the suits instituted against the Government of Bombay by numerous landholders in North Canara, in consequence of the re-assessment of the land revenue in that district, which was annexed to the Bombay Presidency in 1862. Munro's settlement, as has been said, amounted to star pagodas 4,65,148-33-64, or £186,059. In making this settlement, he took as his basis Tippoo's assessment of star pagodas 6,16,089-2-20, adding some fresh items and new heads of revenue, but deducting 1,50,940-4-36 on account of waste land, heads of revenue lost, &c. Even

ravaged by the Coorgs. In many places the cattle had been swept away, the villages burnt, and the inhabitants—men,

thus reduced, the settlement he considered to be higher than could be judiciously imposed upon the district, but did not think himself 'at liberty to depart widely from the system which he 'found established,' as it was the same as that which 'existed in all the provinces which the Company had acquired in the last and former war.' He had made 'no other reduction in 'the assessment of Tippoo Sultan than 'such as was absolutely necessary in 'order to ensure the collection of the 'rent. He considered himself merely 'as a Collector, who was to investigate 'and report upon the state of the 'country, but who was to leave it to 'the Board (of Revenue) to decide as 'to the expediency of lowering the 'assessment.' But while thus assessing the land revenue at the highest sum which could be collected without positive oppression, he urged upon the Board of Revenue and the Government the importance of reducing it to such an extent as to restore a saleable value to the land, and with this view he suggested a reduction of about 80,000 pagodas, to be effected by reducing the assessment in parts of the district to that which obtained at the close of the Bednore Government, in other parts to the Bednore assessment and 25 per cent. of the extra assessments imposed by Hyder, and in others to the Bednore assessment and 30 per cent. of Hyder's extra assessments. Munro's recommendations, which were framed with a view to the adoption of a permanent settlement, at that time in contemplation, were not supported by the Board of Revenue, but were sanctioned by the Madras Government on the understanding that the reduction was to be temporary, and was 'not to 'be entered in the accounts of the province as a diminution of any of the 'existing principles of assessment,' but 'that the whole amount was to be 'entered under a separate head of temporary gratuitous remission, to be 'deducted from the aggregate assessment of Fasli 1209' (A.D. 1799-1800). Munro was at the same time instructed to give his particular attention to certain disproportions which had been observed in the rates of assessment recommended by him, and also to the question of imposing a land-tax upon those estates which under the Hindoo dynasties had been held free of assessment, but had been assessed by Tippoo. Not only therefore was this reduction of the assessment made for 1799-1800 declared to be merely a temporary remission, but the assessment itself was ordered to be revised, with the avowed object of raising it, whenever the condition of the people might justify such a step.

From Munro's second letter it would appear that having, after a longer residence in the province, formed a more favourable opinion of the condition of the people than that which he at first entertained, he did not deem it necessary to carry out the whole of the temporary reduction which had been sanctioned, but limited the reduction of the assessment to 2½ per cent. Munro was shortly afterwards transferred to the ceded districts, and the adoption of a permanent assessment for Canara was indefinitely postponed. Mr. Thackeray, writing in 1807, observes that 'the Collectors of Canara 'have ever since gone on lowering or 'raising the rent according to circumstances. Upon Tippoo's standard each 'ryot's payment to Government consists of two parts shist and shāmil. 'The shist is the old land-tax, and is 'easy; the shāmil is the extra assessment, which is sometimes more, sometimes less, than the shist. Few individuals pay the full sum, including 'shist and shāmil; but while the 'Collector keeps the full standard '6,16,089-2-20 in view, the ryots 'have to look forward to pay it, according to the kykaghiz, as it is 'termed. This standard is too high; 'but the annual settlement is made 'with a view to it, and the amount is 'regulated by circumstances.'

The system here described appears to have been continued for upwards of twenty years with very prejudicial effects on the prosperity of the district. The standard assessment was then reduced, and some years later still further reductions were made, which, followed by the abolition of the transit duties and of the tobacco monopoly, and by a considerable expenditure on roads, has rendered Canara one of the most prosperous districts in India. Now, the question is not whether the assessment is too high, but whether the land of Canara contributes its proper share towards the taxation of the Empire. Except in that portion of North Canara which has recently been surveyed and re-assessed under

women, and children—carried off into captivity. The followers of Dhúndaji had made an irruption from Bednore into the district of Kundapúr; Bilgi was in the possession of a poligar; Ankola and Sadásivaghar were garrisoned by the Sultan's troops, and the Rajah of Súnda had entered that district as his ancient inheritance. It was the height of the monsoon, and the rivers which cross the country at the distance of every five or six miles, were all full, and could only be passed at the few places where there were canoes; so that it was extremely difficult either to communicate orders, or to assemble the ryots of the neighbouring villages, in order to settle their rents. My first care, after arriving at Bekal, was to send off harkāras* into all the districts where they could venture, with proclamations warning the inhabitants not to pay any balances, unless to persons acting under my authority, and enjoining them to detain all revenue officers of the former Government who might be in the country. I had at this time only four men about me who were qualified to act as amildárs,† and I despatched them a few days after the harkāras, to take charge of Kundapúr, Honáwar, Bilgi, and Sadásivaghar, as soon as they should have submitted to our troops. I found it very difficult to get men to send to other districts; for, as it had been a maxim both with Hyder and Tippoo to exclude the natives of Canara from all situations in the revenue line, as Tippoo had dismissed all the shauhagars, and as the people who had been drawn from Mysore to supply their places had mostly fled, many weeks elapsed before I could procure a few gumáshtas.‡

Difficulties with which he had to contend.

I began with the settlement of Bekal, but such was the unwillingness of the inhabitants to quit their habitations and come to the cutcherry at this inclement season of the year, that I was three weeks in finishing, in this small district, what ought to have been done in one. While engaged in this

Attempts of some of the principal chiefs to make their own terms.

the orders of the Government of Bombay, there has been no survey of Canara since it became a British province, and it is believed by those officers who are best acquainted with the district, that large tracts of land are now included in the estates, which are practically not assessed to the revenue. The revenue system of Canara is ryotwár, in so far that the holdings are numerous and many of them small—when the article already quoted from was written, there were fifty-five thousand holdings in Canara, of which nineteen thousand paid less than ten rupees a year to the revenue—but it differs from the ordinary ryotwár of the Madras territories, in that the assessment is imposed upon the estate, or *warg*, and not upon each field, as elsewhere.

* *Harkāra*—a messenger.

† *Amildár*—a collector of the revenue.

‡ *Gumáshta*—literally an agent or deputy—meaning here a native clerk.

business, I received letters from the poligars of Bilgi, Súnda, Vítil, and Kúmla, all to the same purport, congratulating me on the success of our arms, and expressing their confidence that they would be reinstated in their ancient domains. I knew that there were pretenders, either open or concealed, to almost every district in Canara. I saw that any immediate discussion of such claims could only be productive of mischievous consequences, and I therefore gave them all the same answer—that they must repair personally to camp and lay their case before the Resident of Mysore, and that even then they would not be heard until they should have withdrawn all their followers from the Company's territory. Not one of them obeyed. General Hartley had, before my arrival, ordered the Rajahs of Kúmla and Vítil to return to Malabar, and to deliver up the arms they had received from the Commissioners. They so far paid attention to this order as to return themselves, with the view, no doubt, of securing their pensions; but each left his nephew behind with all his armed followers, hoping that by keeping matters in confusion, and hindering the ryots from coming to the cutcherry, they would at last force me to give up the country to them on their own terms. I took no notice of the nephews and their banditti. They were too strong for the civil power, but at the same time too contemptible to be made the object of a military expedition, when the troops were required for more important services. I was also averse to using force wherever a point could be accomplished by patience and fair means, and I therefore contented myself with sending frequent messages to the inhabitants, inviting them to come to the cutcherry, and warning them of the punishment that must inevitably attend their persisting in their disobedience; but it was not till after General Hartley again went to the Rajahs, and threatened to treat their nephews and adherents as rebels, that the ryots of Vítil, came to the cutcherry, above a month, and those of Kúmla near three months, after I had first sent for them. In the mean time, as the season was passing away, it was necessary, without waiting any longer for them, to go to Manjesar, Puttúr, and other districts on the southern bank of the Mangalore river; but here, too, the inhabitants quitted their villages on my approach, and refused to come to the cutcherry except on certain conditions, prescribed by themselves.

The ryots generally do the same.

Previous to the conquest of Canara by Hyder, all lands were private property, and the rents were fixed and moderate; but the amildárs of Hyder and Tippoo laid on one assessment after another, until at last rents were as high as in Mysore. The inhabitants, anxious to recover what they had lost, had frequently been in a state of partial insurrection, and had frequently been severely punished. The principal men among them, however, never lost sight of their object. They kept up a general correspondence from one end of the province to the other, by means of confidential people, who were maintained by private contributions among themselves. They made an attempt, on every change of a díwán * or ashrāf, to gain their point; and they had so far succeeded in 1796, as to obtain a nominal remission of about twenty per cent., which was paid the first year as a bribe to the officers of Government, and went the two following years partly to the revenue servants, and partly to the inhabitants, especially the higher classes, who least wanted it. They thought the transfer of the country to the Company a favourable opportunity for securing what they had so recently gained, and what they could only have expected to hold by large and continual payments to the officers of revenue. With this view, therefore, wherever I went they sent me in a paper, a kind of bill of rights, stating this deduction as the only preliminary on which they could agree to come to any discussion at all of their settlements. I of course refused to admit of any previous stipulations. I answered them, that the revenue must first be brought back to its former standard, and that then whatever appeared oppressive, should be remitted. Finding, after several weeks wasted in messages, that I would not give up, they at last came in. The other districts followed their example; and after the fall of Jamalabad, in the beginning of October, the country being now freed from the enemy, the ryots made very little further opposition to the settlements. Those of Canara were finished in January; and the jamábandi might have been forwarded to you in February, had not the placing Súnda under my charge made it necessary to wait for the settlements of that province, which, from its desolate state, and the disorders to which it had long been exposed, required

But yield on finding Munro inflexible.

* *Díwán*, the ordinary designation of the chief minister of a native state.

a much longer time, in proportion to its rent, than that of Canara.

The existence in former times of a fixed assessment of private property in land a distinguishing feature of the Canara land tenures.

I have been the more particular in describing the obstacles which I met with in the settlement of Canara, because, except in the districts claimed by poligars,* they originated entirely in the inhabitants having once been in possession of a fixed land-rent, and in their still universally possessing their lands as private property,—circumstances which distinguish Canara in a remarkable manner from all the countries beyond the Ghâts, and which must be attended to in whatever system may hereafter be framed for its management. The attachment of the inhabitants to this ancient land-rent, and the obstinacy with which they had resisted every new addition to it, under the Mysore Government, induced me to examine a number of ancient sunnuds† and revenue accounts, in order to ascertain from them what had been the state of revenue under the Rajahs of Bednore, as well as under Hyder and Tippoo, and the cause of its decline. The accompanying statement shows the amount of revenue under the Rajahs of Bednore, and all the successive additions that have been made to it, down to the close of Tippoo's reign. I have frequently entered ten or twelve small items under one head, because it would be endless and perplexing to have detailed them all separately. I have confined myself to the land-rent, without taking any notice of the customs; for the detail of them would afford no criterion from which a judgment could be formed of the state of the country, because rice, from which they chiefly arose, was never permitted to be freely exported by sea, but was always in part reserved, though in a different proportion almost every year, for supplying the troops at Nagar, and in all the garrisons both above and below the Ghâts: and as this rice paid no customs, it therefore often happened that, in years where the produce of rice was equal, the produce of the customs was less by half in one than in the other.

Precautions taken to preserve the accounts.

The great value of land in ancient times led the curnums to adopt every expedient they could think of for the preservation of their accounts, because they were not only a register of the public revenue, but of all transfers of land among indi-

* *Poligar*— properly *pálegár*—a petty chieftain subject to pay tribute and service to the paramount state.

† *Sunnud*—properly *sanad*—a grant or document conveying titles, privileges, or emoluments.

viduals. They wrote their accounts in black books which lasted above a century; and, to guard against accidents, they always made two or three copies, which were distributed among different branches of the family, to be kept separately. Whenever a volume became much worn, from length of time and frequent use, a fresh copy of it was made, and a memorandum was usually inserted in the title-page, mentioning the year of Sáliváhana * in which it had been written, and also the date of the original or older copy from which it had been transcribed. The use of these registers having been prohibited during the Mysore Government, a great part of them has been lost, from negligence and other causes; but enough still remains to furnish a complete abstract of the land-rent during a period of more than four hundred years.

Original mode of assessment.

From the remotest times of which there is any record, until near the middle of the fourteenth century, all land was assessed in rice at a quantity equal to the quantity of paddy sown; that is to say, a field which required ten bundles of paddy to sow it paid ten candies of rice to the sirkár. The measure then in use was called a katti, which contained forty hanis of eighty rupees weight; a katti was therefore equal to three thousand two hundred rupees weight. The rent of three such kattis of land was three kattis of rice, or one ghetti pagoda of the same value as the bahádire now is. The revenue was sometimes collected in kind, and sometimes in money, at the discretion of the sirkár; and, probably, according as the state of prices rendered the one or the other most advantageous.

Vijayanagar assessment.

Between the years A.D. 1334 and 1347, Harihar Ráya, the Rajah of Vijayanagar, made a new assessment of Canara upon the principles laid down in the Shastra, which suppose the produce to be to the seed as 12 to 1, and which prescribe the proportions into which it is to be divided, between the sirkár and the cultivator, agreeable to the Shastra; therefore he reckoned that 2½ kattis of seed yielded 30 kattis of paddy, which he divided as follows:—

To the landlord	7½
To the cultivator or labourer	15
To the sirkár	7½
	30

* *Sáliváhana*, the name of a powerful Mahratta prince, who is said to have reigned upwards of eighteen centuries ago, and who gave his name to an era still current in the Deccan and in Southern India.

and still following the Shastra, he divided the sirkár share as follows:—

To the sirkár one-sixth of the gross produce	5
Devastán,* one-thirtieth	1
Brahmadaya, or Brahmans, one-twentieth	1½
	7½

He reckoned the 7½ kattis of paddy equal to half or 3¾ kattis of rice, from which he deducted four hanis per katti of rice, or one-tenth, for beating it from the paddy. The balance, 3 kattis and 15 hanis, he supposed to be the fund from which the sirkár rent of one ghetti pagodas to 2½ kattis of land was to be paid. Though it is said that in the 7½ parts of the gross produce taken as the sirkár's share, 2½ are for pagodas and Brahmans, it appears from a statement of ináms, that the share actually allowed to them was little more than one. This curtailment was made on the idea of their possessing lands to a large amount not included in the jamá;† and it appears from investigations made in subsequent periods, that these ináms, added to what they held openly, exceeded the 2½ parts which they ought to have on the whole of the jamá, except in what is called the *hobli* of Mangalore, which comprises about one-third of Canara, and which, being at that time mostly held by a number of tributary poligars, was only partially subjected to this assessment.

Additions made between 1547 and 1660.

Between this period and 1660, the only considerable addition they made to it, was by an assessment of cocoa-nut and other fruit-trees, which, under the Vijayanagar Government, do not seem ever to have paid any rent, exclusive of the land-rent. The Vijayanagar assessment, with all additions down to this era incorporated with it, has been for more than a century considered as the *rekhá*, or *standard rent*, of all the lands in the country, cultivated and waste.‡

* * * * * * * *

Ancient assessment alone considered to be the due of Government.

This ancient assessment is still written, not only in all general accounts of districts, but of those of every individual landholder. It is alone considered as the due of Government;

* *Devastán*—properly *Devasthána*—a temple, or revenue applied to the support of a temple.

† *Jamá*, the assessment.

‡ It has not been thought necessary to reprint here the portion of the report which contains the details of Munro's revision of the assessment, a summary of which is given in the note on p. 57.

all subsequent additions are regarded as oppressive exactions. They are not called rent, but are stigmatized by the names of chout, imposts, fines, &c., and distinguished by the names of the díwáns who first levied them. They were always opposed by the inhabitants; and it was therefore necessary in most cases to make them as general and equal as possible, by an even rate of per-centage.

This forms a remarkable distinction between the land-rent of Canara and that of Mysore and the neighbouring countries; for there the rent of every village, and of almost every ryot, fluctuates from year to year, because it is not fixed upon the land, but is regulated by the supposed ability of the cultivator.

Munro did not consider himself at liberty to depart widely from the system which he found established.

However much I disapprove of the numerous additions made to the ancient land-rent by Hyder and Tippoo, I did not think myself at liberty to depart widely from the system which I found established, as it is the same as that which exists in all the provinces which the Company have acquired in the last and former war. I have made no other reduction in the assessment of Tippoo Sultan than such as was absolutely necessary in order to ensure the collection of the rest; I considered myself merely as a Collector, who was to investigate and report upon the state of the country, but who was to leave it to the Board to decide as to the expediency of lowering the assessment.

The effect which would have resulted from Hyder's and Tippoo's assessment, had it existed in ancient times.

Had such an assessment as that introduced by Hyder and Tippoo existed in ancient times, Canara would long ago have been converted into a desert. In a country so rocky and uneven, where cattle are not only scarce, but, even where they are to be had, cannot always be employed; where every spot, before it can be cultivated, must be levelled with great labour by the hand of man—the expense of the first preparation of waste ground must have been so great, that it never could have been attempted, unless the assessment had been extremely moderate; and even after land has been brought into cultivation, if it is neglected for a few years, it is soon broken up by deep gullies formed by the torrents which fall during the monsoon.

The ancient assessment, even after the additions made by the Bednore Government, was moderate.

Not only these reasons, therefore, but the most positive evidence of accounts, clearly demonstrates that the fourth of the gross produce, said to have been taken as the sirkár share in the Vijayanagar assessment, was fully as much as was paid

by the ryots under that Government; for, after the addition made to it by the Bednore family, in 1618, of fifty per cent., besides many smaller additions, making about twenty per cent. more, it appears to have been little felt by the inhabitants. Indeed, it appears that the sirkár share was reckoned higher than it ought to have been, by adopting the shástra rule of the seed yielding 12 to 1 as the basis of cultivation; for an ancient estimate of produce and the expenses of cultivation, drawn up at the time of the original assessment, makes the sirkár's share only one-sixth, which was probably nearer the truth than one-fourth. Whatever proportion it might have borne to the gross produce in 1762, at the time of the conquest of Canara by Hyder, it still seems to have been sufficiently moderate to have enabled the country, if not to extend cultivation, at least to preserve it in the same flourishing state in which it had been in earlier times. Where districts were in a state of decline, it was not caused by the land-rent, but had been the consequence of the diminution of their population, during the frequent revolts of their numerous petty poligars, or it had been occasioned by temporary acts of oppression; for the Rajahs of Bednore, though they adhered to the principle of a fixed land-rent, frequently permitted their favourites and dependants, when placed in the management of districts, to ruin many of the principal inhabitants by the exaction of exorbitant fines under various pretences.

Outstanding balances of assessment were almost unknown under the Bednore Government.

From these and other causes, there were in many parts of the country tracts of waste land which paid no rent, and which could be sold at the rate of from one to eight or ten years' purchase of the sirkár rent. I have met with some instances in which particular fields had been sold as high as twenty-five and thirty years. Under the Bednore rulers, therefore, those outstanding balances which have since been so common in Canara, were almost unknown. It was not thought necessary to keep annual details of the state of cultivation. It was never inquired what portion of his estates a landlord cultivated or left waste. It was expected, that in whatever state they were, he was to pay the whole rent. When he failed, however, as was sometimes the case, it was not usual, even where it could be done, to sell the whole or a part of his land, to make good the deficiency. This was looked upon as a harsh measure, and was seldom resorted to.

The usual custom was to grant him time, to assist him with a loan of money, or to remit the debt altogether. The village or district was scarcely ever assessed for individual failures. On the whole, the revenue was then easily realized; and when there were at times outstanding balances, they seem to have been produced rather from mismanagement, than from the operation of the land-rent.

Present depressed condition of Canara.

Canara has, however, now completely fallen from this state of prosperity. The evils which have been continually accumulating upon it, since it became a province of Mysore, have destroyed a great part of its former population, and rendered its remaining inhabitants as poor as those of the neighbouring countries. Its lands which are now saleable, are reduced to a very small portion, and lie chiefly between the Kundapúr and Chandragiri rivers, and within five or six miles of the sea. It is not to be supposed, however, that the whole of this tract can be sold, but only that saleable lands are scattered throughout every part of it, thinner in some places, and thicker in others, particularly in the Mangalore district. There is scarcely any saleable land, even on the sea-coast, anywhere to the northward of Kundapúr, or anywhere inland, from one end of Canara to the other; excepting on the banks of the Mangalore, and some of the other great rivers. In the vicinity of the Ghâts, the lands are not only unsaleable, but the greater part of them is waste and overgrown with wood. It is reckoned that the population of the country has been diminished one-third within the last forty years; and there can be little doubt but that its property has suffered a much greater reduction. Gairsappa, Ankola, and Kundapúr, formerly flourishing places, contain now only a few beggarly inhabitants; Honâwar, once the second town in trade after Mangalore, has not a single house; and Mangalore itself is greatly decayed.

Causes of the change.

It may be said that this change has been brought about by the invasion of Hyder; by the four wars which have happened since that event; by Tippoó himself destroying many of the principal towns upon the coast, and forcing their inhabitants to remove to Jamalabad, and other unhealthy situations near the hills; by his seizing in one night all the Christian men, women, and children, amounting to above sixty thousand, and sending them into captivity to Mysore, from

whence one-tenth of them never returned; by the prohibition of foreign trade, and by the general corruption and disorder of his Government in all its departments. These circumstances certainly accelerated the change; but, taken altogether, they probably did not contribute to it so much as the extraordinary augmentation of land-rent.

Advantages of a moderate assessment.

A moderate land-rent carries in itself such an active principle of prosperity, that it enables a country to resist for a long time all the evils attending bad government, and also to recover quickly from the calamities of war. When it is fixed and light, the farmer sees that he will reap the reward of his own industry. The cheerful prospect of improving his situation animates his labours, and enables him to replace in a short time the losses he may have sustained from adverse seasons, the devastations of war, and other accidents. But when oppression is added to all the other mischiefs of a tyrannical government, the country, however flourishing it may ever have been, must sink under them at last, and must hasten to ruin at a more rapid rate every succeeding year.

Hyder's maladministration.

Hyder ruined Canara, a highly improved country, filled with industrious inhabitants enjoying a greater proportion of the produce of the soil, and being more comfortable, than those of any province under any native power in India: but instead of observing the wise and temperate conduct which would have secured it the enjoyment of these advantages, he regarded it as a fund from which he might draw, without limit, for the expenses of his military operations in other quarters. The whole course of the administration of his deputies seems to have been nothing but a series of experiments, made for the purpose of discovering the utmost extent to which the land-rent could be carried, or how much it was possible to extort from the former, without diminishing cultivation. The savings accumulated in better times enabled the country to support, for some years, the pressure of continually increasing demands; but they would not do so for ever. Failing, and outstanding balances, became frequent before his death.

Intensified under Tippoo.

The same demands, and worse management, increased them in the beginning of Tippoo's reign. He was determined to relinquish no part of his father's revenue. He knew no way of making up for failures, but by compelling one part of

the ryots to pay for the deficiencies of the other; he made them pay not only for those which arose upon the cultivation of the current year, but also for those which arose from the waste lands of dead and deserted ryots, which were annually increasing. Severity, and a certain degree of vigilance and control, in the early part of his government, kept the collections for some time nearly at their former standard: but it was impossible that they could remain so long; for the amount of land left unoccupied, from the flight or death of its cultivators, became at last so great, that it could not be discharged by the remaining part of the inhabitants; and the collections, before the end of his reign, fell short of the assessment from ten to sixty per cent. The measure which he adopted for preserving his revenue was that which most effectually destroyed it; he forced the ryots, who were present, to cultivate the lands of the dead and absent; but as the increased rent of their own land required all their care and labour, by turning a part of it to these new lands the produce of their own was diminished, and they became incapable of paying the rent of either.

Extinction of the ancient landholders.

The effects of this violent regulation was to hasten the extinction of the class of ancient proprietors or landlords; for many who might still have contrived to have held that rank, had they been permitted to confine their stock to the cultivation of their own lands, when they were obliged to employ it in the cultivation of those of other people, and when the consequent decrease of the produce left no surplus, after paying the rent of Government, sunk to the state of labourers. Nothing can more strongly indicate the poverty of a country than when its lands, so far from being saleable, must be forced upon the cultivators: but this practice prevails more or less throughout Canara, and is very general everywhere to the northward of Kundapúr.

Under the Governments of Vijayanagar and Bednore, the assessments was practically a fixed assessment.

As far as can be gathered from traditions and accounts, it appears that in the fourteenth century, at the time when the rekhá or Vijayanagar standard rent was fixed, the whole of the land was parcelled out among a prodigious number of landholders paying annual rents, in various gradations, from five to five thousand pagodas. Great estates, however, were not common; and the average was nearer fifty pagodas than any other sum. The demand of the sirkár was fixed for two centuries and a

half under the Vijayanagar Government, and may be said to have been fixed under the Bednore Rajahs also, during more than a century; for in all that period the fixed additions to it hardly amounted to ten per cent.

Causes of the low price of land.

The price of land, it has been already observed, was low; but this low price ought not to be ascribed entirely to the assessment. Some of it may fairly be laid to the charge of other causes—to the danger of being suspected of being rich, which hindered so much money going to the improvement of land, and so much from being paid for it, as would otherwise have been done; to the total want of manufactures for the internal consumption of grain, from which the revenue chiefly arose; to the difficulty and expense of transporting so bulky a commodity by land, depriving it of the market of the countries above the Ghâts; and to the want of a naval force to protect the coast against pirates, and to secure, at all times, a free export for the surplus produce by sea. But though the price was low, the property itself was guarded by several equitable and humane laws, or rather customs, originating in precautions which mankind naturally take to transmit their possessions to their descendants.

Facilities for the transfer of land by sale or otherwise.

The alienation of land, by sale or otherwise, was unrestrained. Nothing but gift, or sale, or non-payment of rent, could take it from the owner. If he absconded with balances standing against him, it was transferred to another person; but if he or his heir returned at ever so distant a period, it was restored, on either of them paying a reasonable compensation for the balance, and such extra expenses as might have been incurred on account of improvements. No crime in the proprietor could extinguish the right of the heir to the succession. Where proprietors, holding directly of the sirkár, died without heirs, their estates reverted to the sirkár, which gave them away to a new set of owners, on receiving one, two, or more years' rent as a nazarána,* according to the condition in which the lands might have been at the time. It does not appear that the landlords were, by their tenures, bound to the performance of personal service, or any other condition beyond the simple one of discharging the public rent; and even this was not always rigorously exacted.

* *Nazarána*, lit. a gift from an inferior to a superior, meaning here a payment made to the State on succession to property.

Various proprietary tenures.

Though the estates held immediately of Government were so small that the rent of each did not exceed fifty pagodas, yet the proprietors had under them an infinite number of lesser proprietors, holding their lands of them, with all the same proprietary rights as those under which they held their own of Government. It was usual for the original proprietors to rent, either for a term of years or for ever, such a portion of their lands as was sufficient to discharge the whole of their public rent, and to keep the rest in their hands. The tenants for ever became a second class of proprietors, whom nothing could deprive of their right of possession, unless their own act of gift or sale. On failure of heirs, the lands reverted to the original superior landlord; but a reversion of the estate of the superior landlord to the sirkár did not take place if the inferior could be found.

Modes in which land was transferred.

As all land was private property, no man would occupy or cultivate waste, until he had obtained a pattá, either to secure him in the possession, or if turned out, to indemnify him for his expenses; because he was liable, if he neglected this precaution, to be turned out at any time by the owner, without compensation. When a proprietor alienated land for a certain rent for ever, he either received a price for it, or received none, or paid a sum of money to the person to whom the land was transferred. Which of these modes was adopted, depended on the circumstances of the parties, and the nature of the land; but in each of these cases the tenure was the same, and the tenant was called tenant by purchase.

Land, the property of the State, usually sold.

When the sirkár disposed of lands which had reverted to it by the failure of heirs, it followed the practice of individuals. It sold them almost always for a nazarána. It sometimes gave them gratis, but it never paid money, and seldom or ever advanced takávi * to the tenant or owner. The reason why individuals rarely received, and why the sirkár almost always received, a price for land, is sufficiently obvious. Individuals, in transferring or alienating one part of their estates, always endeavour to do it at the very highest rent that could be got, in order to free the other, if possible, from taxation. But as the sirkár took no such advantage, it gave the whole or any portion of the estate, for the whole or fair quota of the standard rent. As all alienations of land in

* *Takávi*, an advance of money for the purchase of seed or agricultural stock.

perpetuity were said to be by sale, all proprietors therefore, while the Bednore Government lasted, were said to hold their lands either by purchase, or by immemorial prescription.

Nature of the tenures still unaltered. Private property in land still cherished.

The lands of Canara are still to be considered as held under the same conditions, and governed by the same rules of transfer, as they were under the ancient Government. The increase of assessment by Hyder and Tippoo Sultan has, in some places, annihilated the old proprietors; and it has everywhere diminished the quantity, but not altered the nature of the property. What remains is still as much cherished, and the title to it as obstinately contested, as it ever was perhaps at any former period. The landlords, who once lived chiefly on their rents, have now hardly any rent at all. Few of them have sufficient to constitute, of itself, the fund of their subsistence. Many of them procure a part or the whole of their subsistence by the management of farms, or even by acting as labourers. The destruction of a part of the property by the heavy demands of the sirkár seems rather to have increased than impaired the attachment of the proprietor to the remainder. He never quits the estate of his ancestors while he can live upon it as a farmer or a labourer; but if, after paying the sirkár rent and what is due to himself for his labour, there remains the most trifling surplus, he will almost as soon part with his life as with his estate. Disputes concerning land, where the property frequently does not amount to ten pagodas, are often carried before every successive amildár for twenty years.

Comparatively little land in Canara the property of the State.

The only land in Canara that can in any way come under the description of sirkár lands is unclaimed waste, to a great deal of which it is very likely claimants would appear, were it once brought into cultivation. There are also some uncultivated lands, particularly in the northern districts, which may be reckoned public. There are lands which were originally unproductive, and which, from the death or absence of the owners, would have been allowed to run to waste, had they not been contiguous to more productive lands, whose owners it was supposed were able, and were therefore compelled, to cultivate them. But exclusive of this land, cultivated by compulsion, and unclaimed waste, all other is private property.

Evidence of public documents on this point.

This was in ancient times so clearly understood, that the right was never questioned or infringed, and all public docu-

ments convincingly testify that sirkár land was altogether unknown; for in granting lands for the endowment of pagodas or ináms and jágírs to individuals, the sirkár, having no other property in land except what is derived from its rent, did no more than transfer this rent; and the only difference that it made to the landholder was that he now, instead of paying his rent to Government, paid it to the Brahman of a pagoda or an inámdar. The inámdar, so far from having become entitled by his grant to take upon himself the management of the land, had no right even to a residence upon it. He was merely a pensioner, whose pension was assigned upon a particular landlord. This is no doubt the reason why there are no traces of jágírdars to be found in Canara. These men would have required to be put in possession of the lands, and they would therefore seek their jágírs, where this could be done.

None of the inám sunnuds in Canara contain any grant of land, as they do in other parts of India. All that they do is to specify the names of the different landholders, and the amount of the public rent of each, and to direct that the whole of this rent shall thenceforward be paid to a certain pagoda or inámdar; but the land itself not being at the disposal of the sirkár, all sunnuds are of course silent with respect to it. And could there be any doubt as to the meaning of this silence, it would be removed by the universal custom of the country, by which no individual inámdar, or community of inámdars, such as the Brahmans of a pagoda, have the smallest control over the lands assigned for the payment of their ináms. Government, therefore, in reforming the revenue system of this province, have no new rights to private property in land to create. They may augment the value of the property by diminishing the assessment; but the right itself is already as strong as purchase or prescription can make it, and is as well understood as it is in Great Britain.

A similar state of things in Bilgi.

The state of landed property in the small districts of Bilgi is in every respect the same as in Canara.

Decline of Súnda greater even than that of Canara, and commenced earlier.

Súnda has undergone a much greater reverse than even Canara; but it has not been occasioned solely by the tyranny of the Mysore Government. Its decline seems to have begun under the Mahomedan princes of Bijapúr, and to have continued under its own Rajahs, who were successively tributaries

to the Bijapúr Sultans and the Moghul Emperors, and who, besides the payment of their peshcush, were compelled to satisfy the rapacity of the Omrahs, under whose control they were placed, by heavy exactions from their subjects.

Extent to which private property exists in Súnda.

Súnda has, like Canara, an ancient land-rent. Sunnuds mention a survey made in the second century, but whether what is now called the old land-rent is the same, or a more modern assessment, is uncertain. Gardens or plantations of cocoa-nut, betel-nut, and pepper are considered as private property, and follow the same rules as in Canara; but all other land is supposed to belong to the sirkár. It is also understood that, even in gardens, the property of the soil is vested in the sirkár, and that only the trees belong to the owner. As the sirkár, however, has no right to the ground while the garden remains, this is a distinction that can never be attended with any inconvenience to him; for when a garden is once planted, it may be kept up for ever by a succession of young trees, so that he may be said to be proprietor of the soil as well as of the produce. As in Súnda Payanghát one-third of the land-rent arises from cocoa-nut and betel-nut gardens; as all rice lands are occupied by sirkár* tenants, who are not removable while they pay their rents, except in the case of another person offering a nazarána, which rarely happens; as in Súnda Balaghát about three-fourths of the land-rent is drawn from gardens of betel-nut and pepper; and as it is only in a few villages on the Mahratta frontier that the ryots ever quit their lands, there seems to be nothing else wanting but a reduction of the present assessment, in order to constitute the rice lands private property as well as the gardens. There is even now a certain class of them distinguished by the name of shásan, or sunnud lands, which have in this manner become private property. They were originally waste lands, for which a nazarána was paid to the sirkár, in consideration of which they were made over to the purchaser for the simple shist, or standard rent, exempt for ever from all extra assessments. They amount to about six or eight per cent. of the sirkár lands. All rice lands, cultivated and waste, which have no sunnud, being liable to be sold by the sirkár, lands highly improved were

* *Sirkár*, properly *sarkár*, the Government, the State. *Sirkár tenants*, tenants of the State.

sometimes taken from the ancient tenant and given to a stranger for a nazarána, who at the same time received a sunnud which secured him against all future increase of rent.

Most of the land in Súnda not saleable.

Exclusive of these two descriptions of sunnud lands, no land in Súnda is saleable except gardens, and many of them even, in consequence of the rent with which they are loaded, are unsaleable. Panjmahe, or Súnda Payanghát, is nearly in the same state, with respect to cultivation, as the most desolate districts of Canara; but Súnda Balaghát is much worse than either. It is nearly a complete desert. It has not throughout its whole extent a cultivated spot of a mile square, except a few small openings thinly scattered; all the rest of the country is overgrown with so thick a forest, that it can only be penetrated in the few places where roads have been made. Most of the heads of villages formerly retained parties of thieves in their service; for Súnda, having long been a frontier country, touching on the territories of several different powers, and its jungles affording the most complete cover to banditti, it has probably been accustomed to plunder all its neighbours, and to be plundered by them, ever since these circumstances concurred to favour such disorders.

Disturbed condition of the country.

These banditti, to the number of three or four thousand, secretly encouraged by the principal inhabitants, in 1796 expelled all the Sultan's garrisons excepting those of Hallihal and Sadásivaghar, and defeated several parties sent against them; and though they were at last dispersed by a strong detachment, several of the ringleaders continued, at the head of bands of fifty or a hundred men, to elude the search of their pursuers among the jungles, and to commit depredations on the country till the beginning of the Company's government. As they were then offered indemnity for all past offences, and lands to cultivate, many of them have since come in. Some of them, however, still hold out. Robberies and murders, though not so common as before, are still very frequent. Many of the petty Mahratta zemindars, particularly on the northern frontier, give protection to robbers. No village is safe without a guard, so that it will probably be necessary to keep up the present establishment of peons for some years, till these disorders have subsided. The most effectual remedy for them all would, I imagine, be a moderate land-rent, which, by holding out an easy and certain livelihood, would bring back a great part of

these banditti, who were originally labourers, to the habits of industry.

Principles on which the assessment should be revised.

Having thus explained at some length the ancient and present state of Canara and Súnda, it only remains for me to offer a few observations respecting what ought to be the rate of assessment, and the extent of farms under a fixed settlement; but, as the assessment is of much greater importance than the division of the country, I shall confine myself entirely to it in the present letter. It may be supposed that, without the aid of a previous survey, or of the experience to be derived from long residence, I cannot form any correct judgment upon the subject. This may be true in many instances with respect to the assessment of farms or villages in detail, but there are certain points from which sufficiently just conclusions may be drawn with regard to what ought to be the total amount of the assessment. There can be little doubt that both Hyder and Tippoo generally raised rents as high as they could go, and frequently beyond what the land could bear. Their example, therefore, ought certainly not to be our guide; but the assessment of the current year, on the same quantity of land, is nearly as high as ever Hyder's was at any time, and is higher than Tippoo's collections were, except during a few years in the early part of his reign. But when it is considered how much the country has suffered, both in population and property, within the last twenty years, I am perfectly convinced that the settlement is now, in proportion to the resources of the inhabitants, fully as heavy as it ever was in any one year under Hyder or Tippoo Sultan. It might always be realized in times of tranquillity; but without a reduction of it, land would never become generally saleable; and it ought therefore to be rejected as inconsistent with the liberal principles of the Bengal system.

The assessment ought not to be higher than that in force under the Bednore Government.

It may very safely be assumed that no native Government is ever more indulgent in the assessment of its subjects than the British Government ought to be. It is urged that the low assessment of the Vijayanagar family ought to be ascribed to the distance of Canara from the seat of Government enabling its servants, without the fear of discovery, to give false statements of it. This objection cannot surely be brought against the Bednore assessment; for the capital was within twelve miles of the nearest part, and was little more

than one hundred miles from the most distant part of Canara. The Bednore assessment, however, seems to have been raised as high as it could possibly be raised, without destroying private property in land by rendering it unsaleable; and could it have been raised higher without producing this consequence, it would undoubtedly have been done. It may therefore, without the smallest danger of relinquishing too much, be admitted that the whole of the land in cultivation ought not to be assessed at a higher rate than it was under the Bednore Government at the time of Hyder's invasion.

The reduction which will be necessary.

The reduction which it would be necessary to make for this purpose would be equal to star pagodas 98,780-10-67, which is the excess of the present settlement of the land-rent above star pagodas 3,39,283-12-8, the Bednore assessment of the same land. This is the reduction which, all other things remaining equal, would be required in order to restore the country to the same flourishing condition in which it was before it became a province of Mysore. But as Government have determined, on the introduction of the permanent system, to abolish all road customs, and all duties whatever on grain, which will in a certain degree have the same effect, though not so directly, as a reduction of the land-rent would have, it will not be necessary to grant the whole of the proposed abatement.

Rate of assessment in the several districts to be regulated partly with reference to the benefit they will respectively derive from the abolition of the duty on rice.

Rice is the grand source of the customs, and the benefit which will accrue to the country from the abolition of them will be nearly in the ratio of the duties now paid on that article, and the quantity of it annually exported, to the amount of the land-rent. But the duties paid on exportation by the districts of Honáwar and Ankola are only three rupees, while in all the districts of Canara they amount to eleven rupees on the corge, varying in different places from 1533 to 1638 pakká sers;* and the quantity also now exported from Honáwar and Ankola is so small, that the duties on it only amount to star pagodas 1200, while the duties on what is exported from the rest of Canara are equal to star pagodas 3200. It is therefore evident that the immediate advantage which would result from the abolition of the duties on rice would be to Ankola and Honáwar only as star pagodas

* *Pakká ser*, a measure of weight equal to about two pounds.

1200—the amount of the duties now paid—to star pagodas 75,611-5-33, the amount of their land-rent; while to the other districts it would be as star pagodas 32,000 to star pagodas 3,20,366-31-36. For this reason, then, and because Honáwar and Ankola are in a much more desolate state than any other part of Canara, I would recommend that their fixed assessment should not be more than the Bednore assessment; that the fixed assessment of Kundapúr, Bilsáwar, and Bárkúr, as likewise of Súnda Balaghát and Bilgi, on account of the advantages which they will derive from the free sale of their pepper, should be made equal to that of Bednore and 25 per cent. of the extra assessments by Hyder; and that the fixed assessment of all the other districts should be equal to the Bednore assessment and 30 per cent. of the extra by Hyder, because they escaped a great part of the 50 per cent. additional imposed in 1618. The loss of land-rent which this would occasion would be nearly as follows :—

Súnda Balaghát and Bilgi	St. pags.	11,456	10	2
Ankola and Honáwar	„	12,723	16	38
Kundapúr, Bárkúr, and Bilsáwar	„	18,406	1	2
The rest of Canara	„	35,785	33	38
Total	St. pags.	78,371	25	0

or say, in round numbers, 80,000 pagodas.

Reductions proposed for the ensuing year.

Whether the Board may think it expedient to adopt the assessment here proposed, or any other, as the foundation of a permanent settlement, it is very clear that, whatever it may be, it must be greatly below the existing one; and as it is certainly desirable that the inhabitants should, as early as possible, partake of the benefits of the system intended to be introduced, no time ought to be lost in making some reduction in the land-rent and abolishing a considerable part of the customs. This might be done by remitting in the settlement of the ensuing year one-half of the proposed reduction of the land-rent; by abolishing all duties on rice in Ankola and Hanáwar, and all except one Bahádari pagoda per corge on exportation by sea in the other districts of Canara; and by abolishing all duties on rice, and one-fourth of the duties on pepper, in the districts above the Ghâts.

The immediate loss of revenue which would attend the reductions would be nearly as follows :—

Estimated amount of the immediate loss of revenue.

	Land rent:			Customs on rice.	Pepper.	Total.		
Ankola and Honáwar	6,361	26	19	1,200		7,561	26	19
Kundapúr, Bárkúr, and Bilsáwar	9,203	0	41	5,600		14,803	0	41
The rest of Canara	17,892	34	59	12,200		28,892	34	59
Súnda Balaghát and Bilgi	5,728	5	1	500	1,000	7,228	5	1
Star Pagodas ...	39,185	30	40	19,300	1,000	59,485	30	40

The remission of this sum, large as it is, ought not to be regretted, when it is to be considered that it is merely relinquishing a part of a burdensome assessment, under which the country could never make any great progress towards improvement, and that a greater sacrifice must still be made before a settlement can be effected on the principles of the Bengal system.

Importance of abolishing the export duty on rice, with a view to the improvement and extension of the cultivation.

In a country like Canara, totally destitute of manufactures, which pays three-fourths of its land-rent from rice, and near one-half of it from the exportation of that commodity, it is obvious that an export duty of 20 to 25 per cent. must not only greatly discourage the improvement of the land now in cultivation, but must operate as a prohibition to the occupancy of what is waste. It is therefore of the utmost importance that it should be abolished wholly, or at least in part, as soon as possible, and that the remission should be published to the inhabitants by the end of the current Faslí,* because it will have a beneficial influence on the settlement of next year, by promoting the cultivation of waste land—will be advantageous to the landlord, by increasing the demand of the foreign market, and enabling him to get a better price for his grain.

* *Faslí*, the agricultural or revenue year, commencing on the 12th July.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

19th November, 1800.

Further experience gives a more favourable view of the condition of the people of Canara. Numberless disputes about landed property.

MANY circumstances have occurred within these few months to induce me to judge more favourably than I did formerly of the condition of the inhabitants of Canara; but none has so much attracted my attention as their numberless disputes about landed property. In the Baramahal, a dispute about land scarcely came before me once in six months; in this country every other cause of litigation or complaint seems to be lost in that of land. It alone produces more than nineteen in twenty of all the complaints that I hear. The accumulated suits of half a century appear to have broken loose at once; and every moment that I can spare from my ordinary business has been given to the hearing of them, without having sensibly reduced their number. They formed a principal branch of the emoluments of the sirkár servants, not only under the Mysore, but also under the Bednore Government; for it was the practice of almost every amildar to receive money to set aside the decisions of his predecessors, which accounts for such a multitude still remaining unsettled. Both these claims of long standing, and new ones which arise every day, evince that land, notwithstanding all the subsequent additions to the shist, is still considered as a very valuable property. Claims come chiefly, as may be supposed, from the most flourishing districts; and the proportions that come from different districts may be reckoned a tolerably good criterion for estimating their comparative state of wealth or poverty. We may be sure that where lands are so much the object of contention, there is no danger of their being unable to discharge the

public rent; for men would hardly lose their time, and spend their money, for the sake of acquiring that which is not worth the holding, or which might involve them in loss. Were all estates in Canara worth disputing for, I should not think any absolute necessity existed for reducing any part of the assessment. There is no part of Canara where the ryots of themselves throw up their old lands and occupy new. There are parts where, though a man will not quit his land, yet when he has been dispossessed by force or intrigue, he does not think the object sufficiently important for him to pay anything for its recovery; but in by far the greatest part of Canara the right to land is so obstinately contested, that a man, however just his title may be, is rarely permitted to succeed to his estate without encountering the opposition of some rival or other, who endeavours to invalidate his claim, and to set up one of his own, supported by false witnesses or forged deeds, which are very common in this country.

The relative degree of value attached by the natives themselves to land, in different parts of the province, could we exactly ascertain it, combined in some degree with a retrospect of the shist and collections of former times, would afford the best standard for determining the proportions of the assessment, which ought to be reduced.

Difficulty of ascertaining the produce or value of land.

It is scarcely possible to ascertain the produce or value of land from the owner or cultivators. Long experience has taught them that concealment is their best defence against new exactions; and all of them, however simple in other respects, are continually on their guard against any questions that tend to lead to any disclosure of their circumstances. A careful survey would, however, yield us a great deal of useful information, which cannot be drawn from them; for, by learning the rents paid by tenants to the landlords, and comparing the lands of the tenants to the whole lands of the estate, a tolerably good guess might be made of the net income of the landlords. A survey, however, cannot be made without a heavy expense; and there is no other mode of acquiring so much knowledge of the state of the country. Next to a survey, the best way of gaining this knowledge would be by keeping a register for some years of the rent and produce of all lands that become the subject of litigation. There is always something or other on such occasions which induces one of the

A survey would be the best mode. Next to a survey, a register of the rent and produce of lands brought into litigation is the most reliable.

parties to bring forward a statement of the produce. As there is therefore no difficulty in discovering it, and as these disputes are so very frequent, a great number of examples might soon be collected from each district; and the average produce of these lands might be taken as that of the whole district—or, at least, it would not be far from it, after deducting sirkár lands, which, from not having an owner, are but poorly cultivated.

The evidence on this point, both of landlords and of tenants, is commonly false.

I have endeavoured by every means in my power to ascertain, from such circumstances as have come within my observation, what are the relative proportions of the produce, after deducting all expenses of cultivation, that go to the sirkár and to the landlord. The evidence of the tenants, were it not most commonly false, would at once determine the point, because all rents of tenants to landlords in Canara are paid either in money or a certain fixed quantity of grain, and never by a share of the crop, or what is called wáram. In taking the reports of the landlords themselves, the lowest that any of them have reckoned their average share of the net produce to a district, or mágáni, is fifteen per cent., and the highest forty per cent. Though I imagine that the highest of the extremes is too low, yet the admission of either of them on their part is more than could have been expected, for it proves incontestably the existence of a land rent. The reply of the farmers of the Baramahal to similar queries was always that there was no rent, and seldom any profit, or anything beyond the mere wages of their labour. In both cases they represented their situation as much worse than it really was. According to their own statements, however, there is a wide difference between the condition of the farmer of Baramahal and that of the landlords of Canara.

Munro's impressions as to the average proportion of the net produce received by the landlords.

Among the numerous causes respecting land which have come before me, the landlords' rent was much oftener above than below fifty per cent. of the net produce. In many instances it was sixty, seventy, and eighty per cent. The most productive lands, it may be said, are the most liable to become the subject of litigation, and cannot therefore be taken as a standard for the average of the whole. It does not appear to me, however, that they ought to be regarded as a selection, or that they might not form a fair average, for they comprehended every description of land—those of the poorest, as well as those of the

most substantial, landlords. A cause in which most of the native Christian proprietors were concerned, has furnished me with a great number of examples, the result of which is still more in favour of the landlords. In 1784, when they were carried into captivity by Tippoo, their lands were confiscated, and either given away, or sold to men of other castes for a price far below their value. They have now claimed their restoration; and in order to determine what the present holders may be entitled to as a compensation for purchase-money, improvements, &c., a statement has been drawn up by the parties themselves; and as both have agreed to abide by it, there can be no doubt of its being perfectly correct. The only difference is about the price of the rice, the one party reckoning the average three moras to the pagoda, the other four. The Hindus assert that the Christians are the most industrious of all castes, and that therefore they have more rent than any other. The Christians deny this, and say that they have got the name of being industrious from selling vegetables in Mangalore, and engaging in various occupations, but that the Hindu landlords, from confining themselves entirely to the cultivation of their lands, render them fully as productive as theirs are; that the Hindus, though they have more bad land, have also more good; and that the average rent of Hindu landlords is not, in any one of the five districts contained in the statement, so low as fifty per cent. of the net produce. It was my intention to have procured from every Christian landlord an account of the produce of every estate which bordered on his own. This would have probably furnished me with the detail of about a thousand estates, the average of which might, without any material error, have been taken as that of the districts to which they respectively belonged; but as my removal has prevented me from obtaining this account, I can only attempt to draw a conclusion from such circumstances, tending to throw a light on this subject, as I have hitherto had an opportunity of noticing. From comparing them all, I am inclined to believe that the average rent of landlords is about fifty per cent. of the net produce in all the districts below the Ghâts, except Mulki, Kundapúr, and Bekal, where it may be from thirty to forty, and Ankola and part of Honáwar, where it is somewhat less.

Anything like equality of assessment or of produce can

Necessary inequalities of the assessment, and their causes.

hardly be supposed to exist throughout so extensive a tract of country. The clear rent is in many instances as low as fifteen per cent., and in many as high as eighty per cent. of the net produce. The disparities are oftener owing to the different proportions of labour bestowed on the land than to those of the assessment. Many of those estates which now yield the lowest proportions of rent, were formerly among the most productive. They have fallen into decay from the exactions of nazarânas for the sirkâr, of fines for pretended or trifling offences, and of presents for an endless succession of asophs and amildars; from the arbitrary and uncertain amount of the different kists; from their frequent anticipations, by which petty landowners were often compelled to sell or mortgage their estates for the payment of revenue before it was due; from such anticipations being often directed beyond the general rate against particular landlords, in order to compel them to sell their estates to persons who had bribed the amildars for this purpose; and, above all, from the gratuities required every year by the sirkâr. The numerous forts in Canara have each a strong shed running the whole length of the rampart, in order to cover the troops from the weather. These sheds and all other public buildings, besides the houses of all public servants, having been annually repaired before the setting in of the monsoon, demanded a vast number of labourers, as did likewise the felling of trees among the hills, and transporting them to the beach, for the use of the marine establishment. All these services were performed by country labourers; and as the more substantial landowners had usually sufficient influence to get their own exempted, the weight fell wholly on the lower class, who were often deprived of the assistance of their servants at the time they stood in the greatest need of them, for the cultivation of their lands.

The assessment should be regulated, not so much by the present income of the landlords, as by the consideration of what it is likely to be in a state of peace.

As the income of the landlord was affected by these and other temporary causes, the removal of them will enable it to rise gradually to its former standard; and it is not, therefore, so necessary that the reduction of the assessment should be regulated by the present state of income, as by the consideration of what it is likely to be in a few years, when the country shall have recovered from the effects of these disorders.

Remarkable facility with which the

Whether the conclusions I have formed respecting the proportions of income are just or not, there is one thing certain,

that whatever they may be, they do not impede in any way the realization of the revenue, for it has been paid with a readiness of which I have seen no example. Where balances have appeared in my accounts to stand against particular districts, it was not owing to any failure on the part of the inhabitants, but to the late disturbances having hindered the revenue servants from carrying on the collections, or remitting what had been collected to the treasury. The regularity of payments is the more remarkable when it is considered that I have anticipated at least three months what the period of the kists * has been for the last forty years; for the inhabitants opposed so strongly every increase of land-rent, that no part of the additions, either of the Ráni, or of Hyder and Tippoo, ever were paid with the old rent within the year, but the whole was collected separately in the first three months of the ensuing Faslí. They now make no difficulty in paying both the old rent and additions before the end of June; not because they are more able than formerly, but because they believe that their readiness in discharging their rents will not, under the Company's Government, be regarded as a proof of wealth, or as an argument for laying new impositions upon them. I am positive not only that the alterations of their kists has produced no distress, but their circumstances are improving. I know it from having few complaints concerning rent, and more directly from their own acknowledgment, which ryots very seldom make; I see it in their cultivating waste lands, and in their taking, as private property, lands which have long been cultivated on account of the sirkár. These are lands which, from having no owners, had been neglected, and which, as the produce had decreased, had usually been given at a reduced rent, for one or more years. The temporary holder could not claim the proprietary right without paying a sum of money, which he was unwilling to do; and he could not venture to improve, lest he should be dispossessed in favour of a stranger. As he could gain little, so, on the other hand, he could not lose much, because remissions were granted on account of bad crops, which were never allowed in cases where land was private property. When a man agrees to become a proprietor of sirkár land, he shows, at the same time,

revenue has been realized.

* *Kist*, instalment, the portion of the annual assessment to be paid at specified periods in the course of the year.

a confidence both in the forbearance of Government and in his own means of improvement; because, by the custom of the country, whatever may happen, he has from this moment no claim to remission. In the district of Kundapúr, sirkár lands which paid a rent last year of star pagodas 3071-15-8, have this year been given away in proprietary right at an annual rent of star pagodas 3329-32-62; and I have no doubt that all sirkár lands now in cultivation may, in the course of two or three years, be disposed of in a similar manner. The facility of collection, and the growing confidence of the landholders, convince me that the settlement of 1209 (1799-1800) might always be collected without a balance, and that no abatement whatever is necessary to secure it from failure. But if we aim, not merely at the obtaining of a certain sum as revenue, but also at giving a new spirit to agriculture, and raising the country to a pitch of prosperity beyond what it has ever been in former times, the present assessment must be lowered. Were I certain that in the course of a few years the country would so far recover from the shocks it sustained under the late Government, that one-half the net produce or landlord's rent would be equivalent to the public revenue, I would propose no reduction; because, from observing the condition of those landlords whom I positively know to be in possession of half the net produce, and from many conversations with them, I am fully satisfied that it is adequate to every end, not only of present realization, but of future improvement; and that a country moderately improved, the basis of whose assessment should be one-half of the net produce, would, if protected from all other demands, soon pay with one-third what it had before paid with one-half.

The rekhá, or shist, cannot be implicitly followed as a guide in determining the rules of reduction. The actual collections of past years form a safer guide.

In estimating the rates of reduction, I have thought that many other points were entitled to as much attention as the rekhá, or shist, because I suppose the rekhá itself to have originally been, like all other assessments, extremely unequal, and that this inequality has been increased in particular districts by the falsification of accounts. It however deserves consideration, as showing what the land-rent formerly has been, as forming a standard to which it may possibly at some future period be raised again, and as being regarded by the inhabitants as the only proper foundation of assessment. But, after the many changes that have been wrought by time,

it can no longer be implicitly followed as a guide. It is safer to be directed by the present condition of the inhabitants and of the revenue, with a retrospect to what it has been for the last twenty years. No guide is so sure as collection. By observing how the landholders feel under it, many discoveries are made that never would have been suggested by accounts, and which, though they cannot easily be explained by figures, the manager on the spot perceives, have wasted the resources of agriculture, and must have a principal place in his calculation of a permanent revenue.

Reductions made for the current year.

The only reductions I have made, for the present year, are by lowering the land-rent 2½ per cent. and the export customs on rice to two Baháđari pagodas per corge, and abolishing the inland duties on grain, cattle, sheep, &c. These are all that are required to serve the end of affording some immediate relief.

The remaining reductions of customs may be deferred till the Madras customs regulations are introduced; and of the land-rent, till the permanent system is established.

There will be an increase of about 3000 pagodas to the land-rent from the cultivation of waste, which will diminish in part the reduction of 2½ per cent.

Chief reason for reduction is to convince the land-holders that the demand of the State is limited.

My chief reason for remitting 2½ per cent. was to convince the landlords that demand is limited; and thereby to encourage them to exert their whole means in improving their estates to the utmost, without any fear of a new assessment.

The consumption of luxuries will never yield much revenue in India.

Any further reduction of the export duties on rice is perhaps unnecessary. It is the only channel through which a compensation can be received for the loss of land-rent, and through which revenue may rise, in some degree, as the country flourishes; for there is no solid ground to suppose that consumption of luxuries, or even of conveniences, will ever yield much revenue in India.

Effect of the reductions of the land assessment and of the customs on rich and poor landholders respectively.

Both the reductions of customs and of land-rent will eventually benefit the landlord, but they will act in different ways. A reduction of land-rent will operate both more directly and more equally in giving vigour to agriculture and relieving the poorer class of landlords, than any reduction of customs could do, because they receive the benefit of it immediately, without waiting for the sale of their grain. In this case, too, the benefit is extended equally in the same proportion to the

rich and the poor. But the reduction of the customs is more in favour of the rich than of the poor, because the rich proprietor can always raise a greater quantity of produce on the same extent of land, or in proportion to his rent, than the poor one can possibly do.

THE REPAIR OF TANKS.*

16th July, 1801.

All tanks, however productive, become at last unproductive, owing to the silting up of the beds.

All tanks, however productive they may have once been, become at last unproductive; for in process of time the influx of water brings so much mud along with it, as to raise the bed nearly to the level of the bank. When this has happened, the tank is past all remedy, and whatever money is laid out upon it is thrown away; for a greater rent may usually be got from cultivating the rich mould within the tank, than from the fields below which it can now water. But to attempt the construction of new tanks is perhaps a more hopeless experiment than the repair of those which have been filled up; for there is scarcely any place where a tank can be made with advantage, that has not already been applied to this purpose by the inhabitants. The residence of a European is too short in any one place to enable him to judge correctly respecting the situation best adapted for a new tank. If he sees what he supposes to be a very favourable spot, where no work of this kind has ever before been raised, he may be pretty certain that there is some insurmountable objection which has escaped his observation. Either the supply of water is precarious, or the bottom is false and will not hold it, or there are not ryots to cultivate the land.

Description of tanks which it is useful to repair.

The tanks which it is most useful to repair are such as, being in the neighbourhood of populous villages, may have been burst by the water, but not filled up with mud.

* A few months before this paper was written, Munro had been transferred to the charge of the Ceded Districts, an extensive tract of country to the south of the rivers Túngabadra and Krishna, and consisting of the greater part of the present Collectorate of Ballári, of Cuddapah, and of the tálúks of Dúpád and Kambam, now attached to the Collectorate of Karnúl. The cession of this tract by the Nizam has been already referred to in the introductory memoir.

THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE RYOTS FOR THE EXECUTION OF ORDINARY REPAIRS TO MINOR IRRIGATION WORKS.

17th January, 1803.

It is usually the duty of the ryots to execute the ordinary repairs of tanks.

It is usual in many places, when the damages of tanks are trifling, not amounting to above ten, twenty, or thirty pagodas, for the cultivators themselves to make the necessary repairs, either by their own labour, or by an assessment of grain for the help of waddiwárs. Wherever this custom has been established, it ought to be continued; for, were the sirkár to make every little repair at its own expense, applications would be endless, and the inhabitants would feel no motives to urge them to attend to the preservation of their tanks. There are very few tanks in which ordinary repairs have not always been made, either by the cultivators themselves, or by the revenue servants at their expense, by levying a contribution of grain regulated by the quantity of each man's land. The execution of such repairs is therefore no new burden, for it may be considered as one of the conditions of the tenure by which they hold their lands. When a tank bursts after the crop is pretty far advanced, the ryots, to save themselves from the consequent loss of all their past labour, which must ensue if the tank is not instantly built up, are commonly on such an occasion active enough in repairing the damage; but were the same thing to happen before their grain was sown, they would give themselves no trouble about it, but apply to the amildár to execute the work at the public expense. It is therefore best to discourage all demands for trifling repairs, which can be made without the help of waddiwárs, or bricklayers.

The expense of the repairs which it has been customary

for the ryots themselves to make will vary in different situations, but I should never think it too heavy while it did not exceed five per cent. of the rent of the lands watered by the tank; and wherever a tank bursts, a greater proportion of work ought to be exacted from the inhabitants than in ordinary cases, where the repair is rendered necessary by the gradual injuries of time; for a tank seldom bursts unless from the negligence of the people of the village in remaining at home during a heavy rain, instead of watching by turns upon the bank, and being ready to open a passage for the superfluous water.

The repair of watercourses is still more common than that of tanks, by the labour of the cultivators. In every part of the country watercourses are annually cleared out by them, and the performance of such work is not regarded as any extra duty more than the payment of their rents. In my own division, all the watercourses from the Pennār and the smaller rivers are kept in repair by the cultivators. Those from the Túngabadra, being upon a greater scale, and more exposed to damage, may perhaps have been most frequently cleared out at the expense of the sirkár; but even in these, I imagine that a part of the work has always been done by the cultivators. There is nothing in the expense that ought to be too heavy for them to bear; but it is possible that the work is chiefly required near the heads of the watercourses, that it is too much for the inhabitants of the adjacent villages to perform, and that those of the villages lower down could not assist, on account of the distance, without suffering great inconvenience. All watercourses from tanks ought invariably to be kept in good order by the cultivators themselves. It is only in cases where they may have been choked up from the neglect of many years that they ought to be cleared out at the public expense. It will be proper to investigate these matters fully, and to continue either to demand from the inhabitants those repairs which they have been accustomed to execute, or else to make them defray the charge by an extra assessment.

Still more so in the case of watercourses.

ON THE RELATIVE ADVANTAGES OF THE RYOTWÁR AND ZEMINDÁRI SYSTEMS.

15th August, 1807.

Under the Mahomedan Government the assessment was never less than one-third, and was often one-half of the gross produce.

THE assessment of Akbar is estimated by Abul Fazel at one-third, and by other authorities at one-fourth of the gross produce, but it was undoubtedly higher than either of these rates; for had it not been so, enough would have remained to the ryot, after defraying all expenses, to render the land private property; and as this did not take place, we may be certain that the nominal one-third or one-fourth was nearly one-half. This seems to have been the opinion of Árangzíb, for he directs that not more than one-half of the crop shall be taken from the ryot; that where the crop has suffered injury, such remission shall be made as shall leave him one-half of what the crop might have been; and that where one ryot dies, and another occupies his land, the rent should be reduced, if more than one-half of the produce, and raised, if less than a third. It is evident, therefore, that Árangzíb thought that one-half was in general enough for the ryot, and that he ought in no case to have above two-thirds. The mode of assessment in the Ceded Districts and in the Deccan still limits the share of the ryots to those proportions, but makes it commonly much nearer to one-half than two-thirds of the produce. If, by fixing the Government rent at one-third, he were allowed to enjoy the remainder, and all such future increase as might arise from his industry, he would never relinquish his farm, and all cultivated land would soon become private property. If more than one-third is demanded as rent, there can be no private landed property, for it is found that when land which had formerly been inám

If the assessment is more than one-third of the gross

is assessed, as long as the rate is not more than one-third of the produce, the land is regarded as a private estate, and can generally be sold; but that whenever the rate exceeds one-third, the land is scarcely ever saleable—is no longer reckoned private property, and is often abandoned. It is also found by experience, that one-third of the produce is the rate of assessment at which persons, who are not themselves cultivators, can rent land from Government without loss; for it enables them, after paying the public demand and being reimbursed for all expenses and stock employed, to obtain a small portion of land-rent. As one-third of the produce is therefore the highest point to which assessment can in general be carried without destroying private landed property, and as it is also the point to which it must be lowered before persons who are not cultivators can occupy sirkár land without loss, it is obvious that, unless the assessment is reduced to this rate, land can neither be occupied by all classes of the inhabitants, nor ever become private property; nor can any permanent settlement be made, calculated to improve the condition of the ryots, or of the public revenue. I am therefore of opinion that in a permanent settlement of the Ceded Districts, the rent of Government should be about one-third of the gross produce. The present assessment is about forty-five per cent. To bring it to the proposed level would require a remission of twenty-five per cent., as may be seen from the following example:—

produce, there can be no private landed property.

Total gross produce, say	100
Government's share of the present assessment ...	45
Deduct 25 per cent. of assessment	11¼
Government's share, by proposed assessment	33¾

Supposing that this remission is allowed, its being granted to zemindárs or to ryots would make a very material difference to the country. I have stated fully in former letters what appeared to me to be the respective advantages and disadvantages of the zemindári or múttadári and ryotwár systems; and all that I have to offer now on the subject is little more than a recapitulation of arguments already adduced at different times. It may be said in favour of the zemindár or múttadár, that he becomes at once a great proprietor, and relieves Government of the trouble of making settlements with

Recapitulation of the arguments for and against the zemindári and ryotwár systems.

Arguments in favour of zemindárs.

the ryots; that, having a deeper interest in the cultivation of the country than the revenue officer, he is better qualified to direct it; that, being more intimately acquainted with the circumstances of the ryots, and having greater interest to prevent their failure or desertion, he is more likely to grant them such remissions as may occasionally be necessary; that he will grow rich himself, and, by granting favourable terms to his tenants, will gradually raise up a body of substantial landowners; that he will require no remissions in his rent to Government, as he will be able to make up for his loss in one place by his gain in another; that he will stand between Government and the cultivator; and, finally, that by conducting most of the details formerly entrusted to the revenue officer, he will greatly lessen the number of accounts, and the charges of collection.

Arguments against the zemindári system.

Against the zemindári system, it may be urged, that the múttadár will endeavour to secure all advantages to himself, by giving only short leases, and making the ryots pay the full rent according to custom; that if he fails in this, and is obliged to lower their rents to induce them to remain on his estate, he lessens his own means of discharging the public dues; and if he is constrained to give up the whole advantage usually allowed to himself by Government, or fifteen per cent. remission to them, his estate becomes in fact ryotwár; that by being restricted from raising his rents, he loses one essential quality of ownership, and by being hindered from alienating his estate in smaller portions than 500 pagodas rent, he loses another; that if he cannot raise the rent, or turn out ryots, he has not the advantage which is sometimes ascribed to the adoption of large farms, for he will not, even if he has the means, attempt to improve where he cannot raise the rent; that the great zemindár defies all authority, and will keep the ryots as poor as they have always been, and the small one, or múttadár, will endeavour to imitate him in his state and armed followers; that, though most of the múttas will finally resolve into ryotwár farms, many of the greater ones will assume the character of zemindáries or poligarships; that the country will be filled with petty armed chiefs, who may hereafter combine to disturb the public tranquillity; and that the system is, on the whole, detrimental to the country, and dangerous to the Government.

In favour of the ryotwár system, it may be observed that it is the system which has always prevailed in India; that no other can be permanent; and that, however different any new one may be, it must resolve itself into it at last, because the duration of great property in any family is opposed by early and universal marriage, by the equal division among all the sons, and by adoption, where there are none. That it is more simple than the múttadári plan, because it requires no artificial restraints, contrary to custom and the laws of inheritance, to prevent the division of estates; because it admits of all gradations of large and small farms, as there are ryots who pay from one to one thousand pagodas; because the owner of the land, where he has tenants, may raise or lower the rent at pleasure, which cannot be done by the múttadár. That it is better adapted to preserve simplicity of manner and good order, because every ryot will, on his own estate, be at once proprietor, farmer, and labourer; because the division of property, by engaging men in labour for their maintenance, is favourable to quiet; because a great body of small proprietors, instead of a few zemindárs or múttadárs, will be interested in supporting Government; and because it facilitates the establishment of the authority of the courts of justice, which can seldom reach zemindárs, particularly armed ones. It may be also said that it is better calculated to promote industry, and to augment the produce of the country, because it makes more proprietors and farmers, and fewer common labourers, than the zemindári or múttadári schemes; because the ryot would be more likely to improve his land, as a proprietor, than as the tenant of a zemindár—and as he would enjoy the whole remission, instead of a small part, or perhaps none, he would be more able to do it—and because the small proprietor, being a better manager and farmer, and more immediately interested than the great one in the cultivation of his land, would bestow more pains on it, and make it yield a more abundant crop. That, supposing the amount of property to be the same, it would be better that it should be in the hands of forty or fifty thousand small proprietors, than of four or five hundred great ones; that by the remission going at once to the ryots, it would improve the circumstances of the class of men from whom the revenue is principally drawn, and would enable them to raise a greater quantity of food,

Arguments in favour of the ryotwár system.

and thus to favour the increase of population; that by allowing the revenue to increase or diminish, according to the extent of land in cultivation, it eases the farmer, without occasioning, on an average of years, any loss to Government; that this fluctuation would lessen every day, as the ryots became more wealthy, and would at last be confined to tank lands; and that the ryotwár system, by retaining in the hands of Government all unoccupied land, gives it the power of gradually augmenting the revenue, without imposing any fresh burden upon the ryots, as long as there is an acre of waste in the country.

Alleged objections to the ryotwár system not very serious.

The chief arguments against the ryotwár system are, the great detail of accounts, and the consequent difficulty of management; the interference of revenue officers in cultivation; the expense of collection; and the fluctuation in the annual amount of the public revenue. But there seems to be nothing very serious in these objections. When a country is surveyed and the rent of every field fixed, the accounts become perfectly simple—they are nothing more than a list of ryots and fields; and if the ryots do not next year take new or throw up old land, the same register will serve again; and as curnums must always be kept, there is no more difficulty in getting from them an account of a hundred ryots, than of one múttadár. The accounts of the customs, which yield so small a portion of revenue, are infinitely more intricate and troublesome than those of the land-rent. If such a remission is granted as will leave the ryots a private rent, after discharging the public one, the interference of revenue servants will be unnecessary. Their own interest will stimulate them to cultivate, as in Canara, where no revenue officer ever thinks of calling upon the owner to plough or sow his fields. The additional expense of collection in the ryotwár settlement would be gradually compensated by the rent of waste lands brought into cultivation; and the fluctuation in the annual amount of the revenue would be gradually lessened, as the ryots became attached to their farms, by the benefits of a low assessment, and retaining them as a lasting possession, instead of changing them, partly or wholly, almost every year.

The prosperity of the great body of the people should be the

The only matters of real importance in a comparison of the ryotwár or zemindári systems are the amount of the reduction to be granted, and the mode of its distribution. If

the sum is in both cases equal, the direct loss to revenue is also the same; but in the one case, the whole remission goes immediately to the ryots, by whom all land-rent is produced, while in the other it may never reach them. The zemindárs will keep it from them for ever, and the múttadárs for a long period of years. In the one case, the whole of it will be immediately applied to the improvement of the country; in the other, either none, or only a small portion will be allotted to that purpose. It seems extraordinary that it should ever have been conceived that a country could be as much benefited by giving up a share of the public rent to a small class of zemindárs or múttadárs, who do not yet actually exist, as by giving it to the ryots, from whom all rent is derived. Where the settlement of a great province is in view, the prosperity of the body of the people should be the grand object to which everything else should be made to yield; and as it is plain that the ryots must reap infinitely more advantage from a remission granted to themselves, than from a similar one to zemindárs and múttadárs, the ryotwár system, with all its supposed inconveniences, ought undoubtedly to be adopted in preference to every other. The zemindár is a kind of contractor, who undertakes to get a greater fixed rent for Government from the ryots, than can be done in any other way. He engages, for fifteen or twenty per cent., to make the ryots always pay what they now do. He can remit nothing to them without loss to himself, and he will therefore keep their rents as high as ever, as long as he can. The advantages of this system may be comprehended in a few words. The zemindár undertakes to pay every year exactly the same amount of revenue, to relieve the public servants from the fatigue of thinking about it, and to settle with the ryots in such a manner that Government shall never hear anything about them.

object of the Government.

It has been objected to the ryotwár system, that it leaves no person between the cultivator and the revenue officer; but this objection is made from not understanding the condition of Indian husbandmen, for in this country the landlord and cultivator can never be permanently separated, as in England. The minute division of property will always render them the same person, with very few exceptions. The landlord must always cultivate his own fields; and hence the collections

The objection that the ryotwár system involves minute interference with the cultivator is founded on a misunderstanding of the tenure of property in India.

must always be made directly from the cultivator in his quality of landlord, and hence there can be no person between the cultivator and the revenue officer, without a creation of zemindárs, who must themselves in time become either petty princes or cultivators. If the whole system of English and of Indian collection is examined, it will perhaps appear that the interference of revenue officers is greater and more vexatious in England than in this country. The land-tax of England is so light, and is so small a portion of the public revenue, that the landlord cannot be supposed to suffer any vexation from its collection; but then there is the excise, for which every house is entered, and the property of every person subjected to as much inspection and interference as the land of the Indian ryot. Were there no excise in England, it would be necessary to draw a greater revenue from the land, and to investigate its produce more narrowly. Land-rent is to Indian what the excise and customs are to English revenue, and hence it becomes necessary to give particular attention to it, and to employ a large establishment of servants to secure every part of it that is justly due to Government.

The annual fluctuation in the amount of revenue under the ryotwár system not such as to cause serious inconvenience.

The annual fluctuation in the amount of revenue has likewise been brought as an argument against the ryotwár system. But this fluctuation will never be so great as to cause any serious inconvenience. It would never in any one year exceed ten per cent. in an aggregate of six or eight collectorates, though it might be more in a single one. It would gradually diminish as the ryots became proprietors, and would in ten or twelve years scarcely ever be above five per cent. As the inequality too would arise as often from an increase as a decrease of revenue, Government would lose nothing by it, and the deficiency when it occurred might always be provided for, either by reserving the surplus of former years or by a loan.

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Expansive character of the revenue under the ryotwár system an important advantage.

Though the revenue at first should be the same, or should be even greater under the múttadári, it has this disadvantage, that the revenue is limited at once, and cannot grow with the resources of the country, whereas in the ryotwár it keeps exact pace with them, rising or falling as there is more or less cultivation. It is no loss on the whole to Government, and must be much easier to the ryots, while they have so little

property, that this fluctuation should continue, for they cultivate most when the season is favourable, and Government thus draws from the country the greatest revenue in those years when the gross produce is the greatest; and the land-rent of India may be said in this respect to resemble the principal sources of British revenue—the excise and customs—which increase or diminish yearly with the commerce of the nation, the fund from which they are derived. The public ought certainly to be regulated in some degree by the private revenue of the country, but nothing can be more contrary to this principle than the múttadári system, for it fixes the public demand now, which must remain the same thirty or forty years hence, whatever addition may have been made to private property in that time. It does not accommodate itself to the circumstances of the country; and because it cannot raise the revenue hereafter, it makes it too high at first, as in the Baramahal and other districts, whose whole resources have been brought to light by survey; and in order to realize this revenue it is obliged to authorize the muttadars, or middlemen, to exact the former high rents from the ryots. On the other hand, the ryotwár system enables the public to advance with the private revenue, as long as there is any waste land in the country; and in doing this it adapts itself perfectly to the means of the inhabitants, for there can be no juster measure of their means than the increase or decrease of cultivation. It also, by making the remission upon the assessment of the land, gives the whole of it at once to the ryots, and, by enabling them to raise more food for the maintenance of their families, facilitates the increase of population, the occupancy of waste for its subsistence, and the augmentation of revenue. The assessment of lands formerly cultivated and waste never cultivated amounts to star pagodas 10,10,842. It would be idle to imagine that the whole can ever be brought into cultivation; but I am persuaded that nearly all the land formerly cultivated, amounting to star pagodas 5,55,962, together with a considerable portion of the waste, will be occupied in the course of twenty-five years.

The public revenue of the country ought to be regulated in some degree by the private revenue.

The ryotwár system adapts itself to the means of the inhabitants.

Probable increase of cultivation.

The increase of cultivation will, however, have no sensible effect in augmenting the size of farms, and thereby lessening the detail of collection. The farms will probably always remain as at present, comprehending all sizes, from five acres

Increase of cultivation will not necessarily be attended by increase in the size of farms.

to fifteen hundred, and paying from one to a thousand pagodas. Their enlargement is prevented at present by the want of property, and will be prevented hereafter by its division. In the Ceded Districts, and throughout the Deccan, the ryot has little or no property in land—he has no possessory right; he does not even claim it. He is so far from asserting either a proprietary or a possessory right, that he is always ready to relinquish his land and take some other, which he supposes is lighter assessed. All land is supposed to revert to Government at the end of every year, to be distributed as it may think proper; and land is, accordingly, sometimes taken from one ryot and given to another, who is willing to pay a higher rent. If this power is exercised with caution, it is not from the fear of violating any possessory right, but of losing revenue; for the assessment is generally so high that, if the ryot is dispossessed, the same rent can seldom be got from a new one. The only assessed land that is not annually at the disposal of Government is that which pays a quit-rent, and is either ináms that were formerly free, or ground belonging to tanks and wells, constructed at the expense of individuals, who are on that account allowed a remission from one-fifth to one-half of the rent. Even in this case, however, private property in land has always been viewed with so much jealousy, that instead of a permanent quit-rent, it has been much more usual to allow the person who digs the tank or well to hold the land rent free, until he is reimbursed for all his expenses and labour, and then to regard it as Government land, and assess it at the full rate. The ryot of India unites in his own person the characters of labourer, farmer, and landlord; he receives the wages of the labourer, the profit of the farmer on his stock, and a small surplus from one to twenty per cent. of the gross produce as rent, but on an average not more than five or six per cent. The smallness of this surplus prevents him from letting his land to an under-tenant, because the rent would not be equal to his subsistence, and also because no tenant would give him even this rent; for as there is everywhere plenty of good land lying uncultivated, which any person may occupy on paying the sirkár rent, it is evident that no ryot will hold land of another, and pay an addition of five or six per cent. upon the sirkár rent, when he may get land of the same kind without paying any increase. As long, therefore, as Government have uncultivated land of a

In the Ceded Districts the ryot has no property in land.

The ryot combines the characters of labourer, farmer, and landlord.

tolerably good quality to dispose of, ryots can have no tenants; and hence there never has been in India, with the exception of a very few districts, any class of landowners receiving their rents from tenants. The tendency of the Indian system of castes and laws of inheritance always has been, and must be, to keep land divided into small portions among the ryots, and to make the same person labourer, farmer, and landlord. Why, then, attempt to subvert an ancient system which places the great body of ryots above want, renders them industrious, frugal, and comfortable, and preserves the simplicity of their manners and their respect for public authority? It has been said that there can be no proper subordination without just gradations of rank in society, and that zemindárs are required in Indian society to accomplish this desirable end; but this opinion is completely contradicted by experience, for there is no people on earth among whom there is greater subordination than among the Hindus, who never saw proprietary zemindárs until they were created by the Company's Government.

So long as there is uncultivated land available, ryots can have no tenants.

Tendency of Indian system of caste and inheritance to minute subdivision of property.

Advantages of the ancient system.

THE IMPOSITION OF A TAX ON INCOMES IN THE FORM OF A HOUSE-TAX.*

15th August, 1807.

The house-tax in the Ceded Districts is more properly a tax on income. It is an equitable tax, and ought to be extended to other districts.

THE plan which I have proposed for forming a permanent ryotwár settlement is so plain that it can require no further elucidation, except with regard to house-rent, which ought undoubtedly to remain under the immediate direction of the Collector as a sort of increasing revenue. The tax which is generally denominated house-rent, is more properly a tax upon income. In the case of labourers and other poorer orders of the inhabitants, where it does not exceed one or two rupees, it may be called house-rent; but even here it is rather a tax upon income, equal to the produce of a certain number of days labour, for the house or hut itself is probably not worth more than five or ten rupees. In the case of weavers and other tradesmen, it is usually termed a professional tax; but as the weaver is rated according to the estimated produce of his loom, and the number that he employs, the tax is evidently upon his income; and in the case of merchants, who often pay a tax of fifty pagodas for a house which would not sell for so much, the tax is clearly an income one, and is so considered by themselves. There is no difficulty in fixing the amount of the tax with regard to labourers and tradesmen; but it is not so easy to ascertain it with respect to merchants, who, though they are supposed to be assessed in some places at fifteen or twenty per cent. of their income, in others pay little or nothing. Under the native Government there were many reasons for this

* This paper is inserted as indicating Munro's opinion regarding the expediency and justice of requiring the non-agricultural, as well as the agricultural classes, to contribute to the revenue.

indulgence. The merchants usually supplied without payment the demands of the revenue servants for cloths and other articles; they were also obliged to furnish at a low rate whatever articles were required for the public service, and to take the sirkár share of the crops, damaged stores, &c., at ten per cent. above the market price, and also in times of exigency to pay occasional contributions. These demands having ceased under the Company's Government, there can be no reason for the merchants being more favoured in one place than in another, or for their not being everywhere assessed in the same proportion as the other classes of the inhabitants. It would be vexatious to attempt to discover the income of individuals, but a tolerable estimate of the aggregate income of the merchants of a district may be made from accounts of the exports and imports, the population, the produce and consumption, and the usual profits of trades; and fifteen per cent. upon the sum resulting from these calculations might be imposed upon the merchants, leaving them to distribute it in detail according to the income of the several individuals. In the district of Raidrúg, where the house-tax is higher than in other parts of the Ceded Districts, and where it is supposed to be about fifteen per cent. upon income, a new distribution was made last year by the merchants and shopkeepers themselves. The total sum was not increased, because it was already sufficiently high, but the shares of many individuals were reduced one-half, and those of others doubled and quadrupled. A few of the principal merchants from all the chief trading towns of the Ceded Provinces were at the same time assembled. They were informed that the house or income tax would be raised, and were directed to state, not what their income was, but what the rate of the tax upon it was in their respective districts compared to Raidrúg. They debated among themselves for several weeks, and at last produced a statement to which they all agreed, as containing the fair rates of their districts. The Raidrúg merchants who were present took care to see that the neighbouring districts were rated as high as their own, in order to prevent any additional assessment from falling upon themselves. The tax might by the same process be extended to every place where it is not yet established, and make a considerable addition to the public revenue. An idea of this increase may be formed from comparing the house-rent of the

Ceded Provinces with that of the richer provinces below the Gháts.

	Star Pags:	
House-rent of the lower classes of the people, tradesmen, &c.	63,946	
Ditto of merchants and shopkeepers	33,124	
		97,070
Ditto to be laid on in Faslí 1217 to 1220, to raise the other districts to the level of Raidrúg		21,000
Star Pagodas		1,18,070

Where merchants are exempted from this income-tax, they contribute little more to revenue than common labourers; they pay no direct taxes, and those which they pay indirectly on betel, tobacco, cloth, &c., are very trifling. It is contrary to every just principle of taxation, that the richer should be more lightly assessed than the poorer classes of the people; and as no additional demand can be made upon them, if the house-tax is permanently included in the land-rent, it ought certainly to be kept separate, in order that it may yield an increasing revenue, as the circumstances of the country improve.

THE POSITION OF THE RYOT AND OF THE ZEMINDÁR.

Evidence before Select Committee of House of Commons, 15th April, 1812.

The ryot, where the ryotwár system prevails, is the cultivating proprietor.

THE ryot in almost every part of India that I am acquainted with is considered as the cultivating proprietor, and in that capacity he is certainly in a much better position than under any zemindár, even if his assessment is equal. In both cases he still feels the pride of independence, and considers himself as a person of higher rank, when he holds immediately of the Crown, than when he holds of any zemindár. He is likewise the master of all his own profits arising from improvement, which he can hardly ever, under a zemindár, be secure in the possession of. The authority of zemindárs is so great, that they will always find means, while they exist, to levy extra contributions upon the ryot, in spite of the utmost vigilance of the officers of Government.

The zemindár in some parts of India is a military chief, in others a farmer of the land-tax.

The zemindár seems to have different characters in different parts of India: in some he is a military chief, having no land or farm of his own—a kind of petty tributary sovereign, who collects his rents from the ryots in the same manner as any other sovereign; in others, as he has been constituted by the permanent settlement, he is not so much a cultivator or a proprietor of the soil as a farmer of the land-tax, and he receives from the land-tax to Government a certain portion, a tenth, sometimes more, sometimes less, for his own subsistence.

PRINCIPLE OF THE RYOTWÁR SYSTEM.

Evidence before Select Committee of House of Commons, 15th April, 1812.

Principle of the ryotwár system is to impose a fixed assessment upon the whole land of the country, including waste as it is brought into cultivation.

THE principle of the ryotwár system is to fix an assessment upon the whole land of the country. This assessment is permanent. Every ryot, who is likewise a cultivating proprietor of the land which he holds, is permitted to hold that land at a fixed assessment as long as he pleases; he holds it for ever without any additional assessment. If he occupies any waste or additional land, he pays the assessment that is fixed upon that land, and no more: his rent undergoes no alteration.

The assessment should be so moderate in time of peace, as to enable the ryot to bear a war-tax in time of war.

With respect to permanency, there is no difference between the two systems; but the ryotwár system leaves to Government an increasing revenue arising from the waste, in proportion to its cultivation. My idea of the ryotwár assessment also is this, that the assessment should be so moderate in peace, as, by enabling the ryot to become substantial, a war-tax in times of necessity of ten, fifteen, or twenty per cent. may be imposed by Government, to be struck off when the necessity ceases to exist. I have no doubt that such a war-tax could be easily levied, and that it would in a great measure preclude the necessity of borrowing money at such periods at a high interest.

Simplicity of the ryotwár, or kúlwár, mode of settlement.

When a district has been surveyed, and the rent of every field permanently fixed, the kúlwár* settlement becomes extremely simple; for all that is required is to ascertain what fields are occupied by each ryot, and to enter them, with the fixed rents attached to them, in his puttah. Their aggregate constitutes his rent for the year; he cannot be called upon for

* *Kúlwár*, lit. according to, or with, all. A *kúlwár* settlement means the settlement of the assessment with each individual cultivator. It is synonomous with *ryotwár*.

more, but he may obtain an abatement, in case of poverty or extraordinary losses. He has the advantage of knowing, at the beginning of the season, when he ploughs his land, the exact amount of what he is to pay; he knows the fixed rents of the different fields which he cultivates, and that the demand upon him cannot exceed their total amount; he knows the utmost limit of his rent, not only for the present, but for every succeeding year, for it cannot be raised unless he takes additional land; and he is thereby the better enabled to provide for the regular discharge of his kists, and against the losses of bad, by the profits of good, seasons.

The kúlwár settlement not open to the objections which attach to the village settlement, on the ground that it induces malversation and disputes between the potails and ryots.

The kúlwár settlement, though it may appear tedious when compared to the village one, is, however, not only better calculated to realize the revenue, but is, on the whole, a saving of time; because, when it is once made, there is no further trouble. But in the village settlements there is so much room for malversation, so many disputes between the potails and ryots about extra collections on the one hand, and the withholding of rents on the other, that more time is consumed in inquiring into those matters than in the original settlement.

Impossibility of dispensing with native agency in the settlement of the revenue.

The Honourable Court of Directors seems to be apprehensive that too much must be left, in the kúlwár settlement, to the agency of native servants. But it does not appear to me that such agency can be dispensed with, or that, when properly controlled, any serious evil can result from its employment. Without it the Company's servants could do little or nothing. The most experienced Collector could hardly make the settlement of ten villages in one year and after all it would, most likely, be done very indifferently. The native servants are restrained, as far as men with inadequate allowances can be restrained, by the same considerations as the public servants in other countries—by the fear of detection, of losing their situations, and of punishment. In all provinces that have been permanently settled, their agency has been used; and it has there a much wider field for abuse than in the kúlwár settlement, because, such provinces having been previously settled for some years by villages, tálúks, or other large tracts, without descending lower into detail, and being then disposed of for ever, all inquiry was at an end. So that if the revenue of villages or tálúks could be undervalued and concealed for a short period, till the permanent settlement

took place, the danger of discovery was over; whereas under the ryotwár system, the minute process that is gone through every year renders the most trifling abuse liable every moment to detection. When the rent of every field has been fixed by survey, there is little room for abuse; it cannot be against the ryot, but may be in his favour, because it can be effected only by reporting cultivated land as waste, or by obtaining remission on false pretences of poverty. But it has often been shown that, from the public manner in which the kúlwár settlement is conducted, and the contending interests of the ryots, neither of these modes of injuring the revenue can reach to any extent, or be long concealed. There can be no doubt that the kúlwár settlement is better calculated than any other to bring to view the whole resources of the country. Whether it is equally well adapted to improve them can perhaps never be certainly known, but by a long trial of its effect in an extensive district.

THE RYOTWÁR SETTLEMENT OF BALLÁRI.*

31st August, 1820.

THE Board of Revenue having, in their letter of the 17th instant, called our attention to their proceedings of the 6th of March last on the ryotwár settlement of Ballári, I have read with attention the able report of Mr. Thackeray, to which it chiefly refers, as well as the previous correspondence on the same subject between that Board and Mr. Chaplin, the late Collector.

Correspondence regarding the settlement of Ballári.

The reduction of twenty-five per cent. on the assessment of the Ceded Districts was proposed in 1807, immediately on the completion of the survey. It was then stated that the assessment had been fixed upon a comparison of the actual collections under the Government of the native powers and of the Company; that, though it was somewhat lower than that of the native rulers, it was so high that it could not be realized every year, but must be allowed to fluctuate with good and bad seasons; and that, though in this way the same amount of revenue might be always realized on an average of years, the rate was too high to enable the country to improve, and that all that could be expected was that it should remain stationary. This opinion was delivered upon the supposition that annual settlements would be continued, and that the ryots would under them have had the advantage, at the beginning of each year, of extending or contracting their cultivation according to their circumstances. Had it ever been conceived that a lease settlement was to be introduced in the room of the annual one, the reduction of twenty-five per cent. would have been

Reasons for the proposal made in 1807 that the assessment of the Ceded Districts should be reduced by twenty-five per cent.

* This, and the rest of the Minutes included in this section, were written by Munro as Governor of Madras, to which office he was appointed in 1819.

suggested, not merely as a measure of expediency, but of necessity.

Disastrous results of the village lease settlement in Ballári.

The establishment of a village lease in Ballári in the year 1814, without any reduction of the survey assessment, has had the consequences which in such a case were inevitable: most of the renters soon failed, the ryots were impoverished, and the villages thrown back upon Government. The lease settlement amounted to pagodas 7,79,000; the highest collection under the Company's Government was that of 1807, and amounted to pagodas 7,78,720. The average collections of the seven years preceding the decennial lease were pagodas 7,19,000. Had even this average, which is pagodas 60,000 below the lease settlement, been adopted, it would have been too high; for when ryots are obliged to pay the same rent every successive year of a lease, instead of paying more or less according to the nature of the season, it distresses them as much as if fifteen or twenty per cent. had been added to their rent, and a reduction to this amount would therefore have been necessary to have left them on the same footing as they were before the lease. The Collector, Mr. Chaplin, was perfectly aware that the lease settlement was high. He observes that it is 'as high as can 'be afforded in seasons tolerably favourable,' and that 'it will 'frequently be necessary that the demands of Government for 'the full rent be mitigated, and the most judicious lenity be 'exercised in exacting the public dues.' The exigencies of Government did not admit of any relinquishment of revenue, and he thought it his duty to maintain it at its highest standard.

Decision arrived at in 1819, to re-introduce the ryotwár system and reduce the assessment by twenty-five per cent.

In July, 1819, so many of the villages in Ballári had reverted to Government that it was thought advisable to authorize the Collector to make the reduction of twenty-five per cent., and to make a ryotwár settlement. While he was making arrangements for this purpose, he was called to the higher charge of the Southern Mahratta provinces. He was succeeded by Mr. Thackeray, who made the proposed reduction in two districts, and has given a most able report on the subject; but his appointment to the Board has unfortunately deprived us of the benefit which would have been derived from his report upon the rest of the districts. The picture exhibited by him of their declining state renders it advisable to lose no time in endeavouring to correct the mischief.

The measure of reduction has already been authorized;

there is no question as to its necessity, but only as to the mode of carrying it into effect, whether it should be done at once in all the districts of Ballári, or gradually in a few districts, until the whole are completed. Mr. Thackeray proposes a gradual reduction in three or four districts annually, and observes that, unless this or some other great relief be afforded, the land revenue will decrease faster and faster each year; that the reduction is wanted, not to improve and secure the revenue, but to prevent its annual decrease, and that it would not do more than place the ryots of the Ceded Districts on an equal footing with those of Coimbatore. I once wished the reduction to be gradual, but the country was not then so impoverished as it is now. It must now be instant, or the country will be so exhausted that it will be almost impracticable to restore it. Out of 2644 villages composing the collectorate, 1788 have reverted to Government, yielding a revenue of about twenty lakhs of rupees. The revenue of the villages still in lease is only about 6½ lakhs. Villages yielding more than three-fourths of the revenue have, therefore, come back to the hands of Government, all of them reduced in their means, unable to pay their rents, and all of them reluctantly thrown up; for no man throws up while the kists can by any exertion be drawn from the ryots. It is in fact an insolvency of nearly 1800 villages. We are not to suppose that the villages still in lease are in a much better condition; a great part of them are exhausted, and will probably soon fall in, but are still held in the hope of a good season, or some other favourable event. In Raidrúg half of the ryots have emigrated. The state of many of the other districts is no better. Most of the great potails are reduced to poverty, many of them have been sent to jail; the substantial ryots, whose stock supported the agriculture of the villages, are gone. The country is no longer what it was ten or fifteen years ago, and an immediate reduction of the assessment is the only way of restoring it to its former state.

Mode in which the reduction should be carried out.

The reduction of the twenty-five per cent. will, in the first year, have no apparent effect. It will merely check the descent of the country to ruin. It will require another year or two before the benefit is seen, but the revenue will then rise gradually and permanently. There are nineteen districts in Ballári. In two of these the reduction has already been made; in seven-

The benefit of the reduction will not be immediately apparent.

teen it remains to be made. If we go on settling three or four districts annually, it will take four or five years to get through the whole, and during that time those last settled will become every day worse, and their restoration will be rendered much more difficult than at present. If we make the reduction in all the districts at once, we shall collect less revenue in the course of three or four years, but we shall collect more in ten years than if we made the reduction by degrees at the rate of three or four districts annually. I would, therefore, for this reason and for others already stated, recommend that the reduction be immediate in all the districts of Ballári.

The reduction should be proclaimed to take effect from the commencement of the current year.

After deciding that the reduction is to be made, the next point for consideration is the manner in which it is to be done. I think that the simplest and best way would be by proclaiming in the villages that the reduction has been granted from the commencement of the current year. Every ryot will then know at once the terms on which he cultivates, because he knows the survey assessment of his lands. As the knowledge of the reduction will be of material use to him in regulating the extent of his cultivation, it ought to be communicated to him as speedily as possible.

The relative rates of the assessment should not be altered with a view to equalization.

The survey rates having, under the lease, become unequal, in some places too high, in some too low, and in many been abandoned, it has become a question whether they ought not to be again corrected. I am decidedly of opinion that they ought not to be touched, and that they ought to stand as the foundation of every future settlement. By having such a standard, Government may in every future period raise or lower the revenue, according to the necessities of the State, by simply increasing or diminishing this standard by a certain rate. The survey rates could not be altered without producing endless confusion and obstruction. Every ryot would intrigue to get his own lands favourably assessed; many of the revenue servants would be bribed, and even those who were honest would be swayed by ill-judged, partial, and temporary motives to attempt to suit the assessment to the fluctuating means of every ryot, and the correction of the survey would end in its being left much more unequal than at first. Even if a survey could be made so perfect that each field should be rated exactly according to its produce, it would soon again become unequal by the various degrees of industry exerted by the

cultivators, by the operations of the seasons, by the loss of cattle, and by a thousand other accidents. It is not necessary for the purposes of public revenue that the assessment should always be perfectly even; all that is necessary is that it should be so moderate as, with an ordinary degree of cultivation according to the agricultural practice of the country, to enable the ryot to pay his rent after reimbursing himself for his labour and expenses. Whatever surplus there may be beyond this belongs to the cultivator; the Government have nothing to do with it. Whether this surplus be great or small, it makes no difference in the public revenue, though it will make a difference in the private rent which the ryot will demand from a tenant. Many ryots, from various accidents, become so poor that they cannot pay one-half of their usual rent, however moderate it might have been. It would be absurd to think of lowering the assessment to suit the circumstances of such men. The proper remedy for poor ryots is the common one of the country: a low rent for a few years—not a reduction of the assessment.

The ryot should be free to cultivate as much or as little land as he pleases, provided that he takes good and bad together. He should not be fettered by any sort of lease.

The next question is whether the ryot should be required to cultivate waste in order to obviate the great loss which the revenue must otherwise sustain from the reduction in the assessment. I think that he ought to be at liberty to cultivate as much or as little as he pleases. There is, however, one point in which some restriction is necessary; he should not be allowed to select all the good and to reject all the bad fields, but should be obliged to take the good and the bad together, according to the custom of the country. He must not be bound by any lease of five or ten years. He fails from so many slight causes that a lease with him is impracticable. He must be left to his own discretion to keep his land as long or as short a time as he pleases. There is no danger of his not extending his cultivation whenever his means increase, and it is better that he should not do so sooner. What is called a putkutt* lease is merely another term for a ryotwár one, and is liable to the same objections, that it constrains the ryot without any necessity or advantage, and deprives him of fields which he always cultivates. These are called putkutt, and sometimes descend from father to sum with little change. In addition to his putkutt, he frequently cultivates one or more

* *Putkutt*, properly *pattukattu*.

fields of inferior quality at a distance from the village. But he seldom keeps them more than a year or two, when he throws them up and they pass into other hands. He retains his putkutt as a fixed possession, and pays a regulated rent for the whole, without specifying the rent of each individual field composing it. This was not necessary under an unsettled assessment, because if he relinquished a part, the Government could fix what assessment it thought proper on the remainder, and the ryot had no redress. But by specifying the rent of each field as in a ryotwár settlement, the ryot is guarded from wrong, because he knows beforehand what remission he is entitled to by throwing up any portion of his putkutt, and the inconvenience of all after litigation on this head is completely obviated.

It is not probable that the cultivation of Government land will be neglected for the sake of cultivating inám land.

The great extent of inám land in the Ceded Districts has given rise to the apprehension that, unless some preventive measure be adopted, the ryots, even after the reduction of the assessment, will abandon the sirkár for the sake of cultivating inám land, and that the revenue will, in place of rising, continue to fall still lower every year. The high rent of the Government land is the main cause of the ryots cultivating inám, and, as long as the present high assessment remains, they will undoubtedly continue to relinquish Government and occupy inám land. This has always happened, unless where it was prevented by the interference of authority. But I am persuaded that the reduction of the assessment will greatly diminish, if not entirely remove the evil, and render any restrictive measure unnecessary, because the ryot takes the inám land solely on account of the low rent at which he gets it from the owner; but if he obtain a moderate profit from his own, he will prefer his own, where he is secure, to the inám, where he is perpetually liable to be ousted by the proprietor. In former times he could not be ousted, even though he did not pay the proprietor one-tenth of the fair rent. He was supported by Government, because the less he paid to the inámdár, the more he was able to pay for the sirkar lands which he cultivated. The cultivation of the inám lands was usually in each village distributed among those ryots who paid the highest rent to Government, and the inámdárs were obliged to be content with whatever they chose to give them. But as the inámdárs are now at liberty, as well as the ryots,

to dispose of their lands as they please, and to remove those ryots who will not pay them the standard rent, they will gradually increase the present low rates. As the ryots, therefore, will henceforth be less secure in their possession of inám land, and as the rent of it will rise, while at the same time that of the sirkár land is reduced, I think that the probable effect of these circumstances will be to keep the cultivation of inám land within such bounds as not to prove injurious to the revenue. But should this opinion be found on trial to be erroneous, it will become necessary to devise some remedy for so serious an evil. The imposition of a tax of from one-tenth to one-fifth on the standard assessment on inám land would, I imagine, have the desired effect. I can have no doubt of the right of the State to resort to such a measure whenever it may become necessary. It was never intended by the native princes who granted the ináms, it was never supposed by their owners themselves, that their lands, instead of aiding in some degree the public resources, were to diminish them. The native rulers always rendered inám lands beneficial to the revenue, because they were in general cultivated by such ryots only as also held sirkár land; these ryots paid, in addition to the ordinary rent of their sirkár land, in proportion to the advantage which they were estimated to derive from the inám. But our demand upon the ryot is limited by a fixed rate of assessment, and it is right that it should be so; but it is not right, where the public revenue consists chiefly of a high land-rent, that one-third or one-fourth of a great province should enjoy the privilege of being cultivated, not only without contributing to the public revenue, but of diminishing it by drawing away the cultivators from the sirkár lands.

Should it prove to be otherwise, it will be necessary to raise the assessment on inám land.

The last point for consideration is whether the reduction of twenty-five per cent. should be permanent or not. I think that it ought to be so. I do not by this mean that it is never to be altered, but that it is not to be altered frequently, but only at distant intervals, when the exigencies or the prosperity of the State may demand an increase or admit of a reduction of revenue. The reduction has always, from the first, been proposed as a permanent measure. It was stated in 1807, that unless it were granted, the country would never improve. The failure, since that time, of the greater part of the Ballári villages, and the decline of cultivation, makes what was then merely a matter

The reduction of twenty-five per cent. ought to be permanent.

of choice, now one of absolute necessity. Without a permanent reduction the country cannot be restored. It is no sacrifice of revenue, for if it is withheld, the reduction will force itself upon us by a rapidly increasing diminution of cultivation. We shall sacrifice less by adopting at once the only effectual remedy. The reduction has already been authorized by Government. It is true that it has never been formally submitted for the approbation of the Honourable Court of Directors; but the Court, though they prohibit us from making leases, do not restrain us from lowering a high assessment permanently; and it is not likely that they will refuse their sanction to the measure now in contemplation, more particularly as it will do no more than place Ballári, with regard to assessment upon an equal footing with Coimbatore and the other districts under this Presidency. Should it, however, be the opinion of the Board, that for the present the reduction should be limited to ten years, until we receive the authority of the Honourable Court to make it permanent, I shall not object to this mode of proceeding.

Summary of the foregoing proposals.

I shall now conclude with a summary of what I propose, for the approbation of the Board.

1st. That a reduction of twenty-five per cent. on all dry and wet land, and of thirty-three per cent. on well land, as proposed in 1807, be made in Ballári.

2nd. That the reduction be made by an uniform lowering of the survey rate; that it be made immediately, and public notice be given of it in all the villages, in order that the ryots may have the full benefit of it in the current year; and that they be informed that the reductions will continue ten years, and, if approved by the Honourable Court, will be made permanent.

3rd. That the ryots be left at liberty to increase and diminish their cultivation, with no other restriction than that of their not being permitted to separate the good and bad lands, which, by the custom of the village, are usually rented together.

4th. That no restraint be imposed on the cultivation of inám lands.

5th. That the Board of Revenue be directed to issue, without delay, to the Collector of Ballári the necessary instructions for carrying the proposed measures into effect.

ON THE EXPEDIENCY OF INTRODUCING ENTAIL REGULATIONS IN ZEMINDARIES, AND OF ENTRUSTING SOME OF THE ZEMINDARS WITH POLICE AUTHORITY.

19th September, 1820.

Expediency of confirming by law the ancient usage under which the estates of zemindárs descended entire to a single heir.

OUR Code of Regulations has, in a great measure, broken down the entail by which the estates of different classes of zemindári and of official servants were protected from division, and descended entire to a single heir. So much injury, both to the public and to individuals, has been occasioned by the change, that I have long thought that we ought to revert to the ancient usage and confirm it by law. Our departure from it has already ruined many ancient families. It encourages dissension among all those which still exist. The members of each family are continually instigated by needy adventurers to apply to the Courts for a division of the estate. Neither the zemindárs themselves, nor their relations, ever know much of business; and the results of such suits is generally, whether successful or not, to leave them overwhelmed with debt, occasioned partly by the expense of carrying them on, and still more by usurious interest on money borrowed for that purpose, or for bribes which their agents assert to have been paid to the vakíls, or officers of the Court. By these means, while the family of the zemindár falls into distress and disgrace, the character of the Government suffers, and more than one rebellion has been the consequence.

Importance of maintaining the ancient families of the country.

In the infancy of our power, when the greater zemindárs could oppose a formidable resistance, the division of their domains might have been desirable; but in the present state of our power it ought rather to be our object to maintain them as entire as possible. If the whole of the zemindárs

were swept away, as they inevitably must be at no distant period, by the operation of our present institutions, we should have nothing of native rank left in the country. All rank and power would be vested in a few Europeans. Such a state of things could not but be dangerous to the stability of our Government, because the natives could not fail to make the comparison between the high situations of their foreign rulers and their own abject condition; and in the event of any discontent arising, it would be more likely to spread and become general when they were reduced to one level, and consequently more liable to be actuated by feeling. They have no common sympathy with us, and but little attachment to our Government, with the exception of a portion of those who depend upon it for their maintenance; and nothing can tend more effectually to shake what they have, than to behold the destruction of every ancient family, and its domains passing into the hands of a set of low retainers of the Courts and other dependants of Europeans.

Zemindárs likely to afford support to Government in times of disturbance.

Our power is now too great to have anything to apprehend from our zemindárs. They know that they cannot oppose it; they also know that it is not our wish to turn it against them, in order to deprive them of any right which they now enjoy, and that they are as secure in the possession of their zemindáries with a small as with a large armed force. They will all by degrees gather confidence from this safety, abandon their military habits, and attend to the improvements of their possessions; and they will, for their own sakes, be more disposed than any other class of our subjects to support our Government in all times of disturbance. This change will be later among some of the remote hill chiefs, but it will ultimately take place among them all. It will be accelerated by the growing extension of our influence in the territories of the Nizam and the Berár Rajah, but by nothing so much as by our own moderation.

Our Regulations are ruining the zemindárs by extending to them the Hindu law of succession.

Our Regulations were originally intended to protect all classes of our native subjects in all their rights; but they have not done this with respect to zemindárs. On the contrary, by extending to them the general Hindu laws of succession, they have already destroyed many of them, and are hastening to ruin those that remain. Our Regulations protect, as far as they can protect, all rights of the people; but they are too much

calculated to facilitate the minute division of property, and the descent of society to its lowest level. This effect was counteracted under the native Government by the lands of every public officer, from the head of a village to that of a province, descending undivided to a single heir; by the possessions of all petty Rajahs, zemindárs, and poligárs following the same rule; by frequent new grants of lands to numbers of civil and military officers, sometimes for life, sometimes for a longer term; and by these officers remaining in their respective districts mixed with the inhabitants, and not retiring with their wealth to a distant country, like the European servants of the Company, who have succeeded them.

Also the hereditary village officials.

Not only zemindáries, but the official lands of village servants have been divided and parcelled out among different claimants; and, unless measures are adopted to stop this evil, every landowner will in time be reduced to the state of a common cultivator. With this fall of all the upper classes the character of the people sinks; they become less attached to our Government, they lose the principal instruments by which we can act upon and improve them, and the task of conducting the internal Government becomes every day more difficult. I am therefore of opinion that we ought by every expedient in our power to maintain the ancient zemindáries and official landed estates unbroken. This will keep up a class of native nobility and gentry, and preserve those gradations in society, through which alone it can be improved in its condition.

Limited scope of the proposed Regulation.

It is not intended to extend the proposed entail to any class of landholders whose lands have not been usually held according to that rule, or to strangers who may already have got possession, by purchase, of portions of ancient zemindáries.

The Honourable Court of Directors have already prohibited the sale of ancient zemindáries for arrears of revenue. We must protect them from sale for private debts and from division by a Regulation. As they were made liable by the permanent sunnud for private debts, they will continue liable for such as may have been contracted between the date of that sunnud and that of the entail, but not for such as may have been or shall be contracted at any other period. The acceptance of the entail should be voluntary, and be left to the discretion of the parties. But when the zemindárs know that it is meant for the security of the succession in their families,

it is not likely that many of them will reject it. Wherever it is accorded, the zemindári should never again be liable to division, except with the consent of Government.

All pensions granted by Government in lieu of land, or fees or rights of any kind resumed, and perhaps all other pensions, should be regulated by the rule of entail, and descend without division.

Zemindárs to have charge of the police in their zemindáries.

As in many zemindáries the attempt to establish the police offices of the European magistrate tends to excite dissension and to harass the inhabitants to no purpose, and as the police can only be administered by the zemindár himself, with the aid of his own people, it would be advisable to leave the management of it entirely in his own hands. Section 38, Regulation XI., 1816, was intended to restrain the interference of the magistrate in the police of the ancient zemindáries; * but it may be proper to declare by a positive enactment that the Rajah or zemindár shall now in certain districts have the sole charge of the police, and conduct it according to the usage of the country; and such of those Rajahs and zemindárs as may, from their rank or antiquity, be entitled to peculiar indulgences, should not be liable, from any cause whatever, to be summoned to appear personally in any Court without the previous authority of Government.

* In this regulation it was enacted that 'in the ancient zemindáries whose 'revenues have always been under the 'exclusive management of the zemin-'dárs themselves, the magistrate shall 'not establish any police officer, except 'in such places as darogahs may have 'already been established, without the 'previous sanction of the Governor in 'Council.' In Section 39 of the same regulation 'Magistrates are authorized 'to grant, upon their own responsibility, 'to zemindárs, who may be desirous of 'acting as heads of police, and whom 'they may consider to be qualified for 'the office, sunnuds to act as such 'within the limits of their respective 'zemindáries only. The magistrate shall 'prescribe to the zemindárs, in their 'commissions, the whole or such part 'of the duties and authority vested by 'this regulation in tahsildárs as they 'may deem proper.'

THE SAME SUBJECT.

25th February, 1823.

Result of the reference regarding the proposed entail Regulation.

THE measure of entailing the ancient zemindáries by a Regulation has now been above two years before the Board. The heads of the proposed Regulation were sent to the Collectors, in order that their opinions and those of the zemindárs regarding it might be obtained before it should be passed into a law. The answers have been received. Those of some of the zemindárs are in favour of the Regulation, but those of more are against it. The reasons urged against it are various: the difficulty which, it is said, will be found in borrowing when the land is no longer liable for the debt, and the consequent danger of the zemindári being resumed in unfavourable seasons, from the zemindár being unable to raise funds to discharge the Government revenue; the wish of the zemindár to retain the power of transferring or dividing his possessions; his aversion to taking charge of the police, from the fear of penalties and of degradation to the rank of a police officer; and his suspicion that further changes may be intended, which may lead to the loss of the zemindári.

The acceptance of the Regulation may be made optional.

These objections, however, may in a great degree be removed by making the acceptance of the Regulation optional, and in the sketch which I now submit this is provided for, and the points which were deemed most objectionable in the former draft are either modified or omitted. It is probable that some of the zemindárs will agree to the amended draft at first, and that most of the rest will follow their example, when they perceive that it is calculated to secure the possession of their zemindáries to their descendants.

The proposed change will not add to the business of the Government.

It may at first sight appear that the direct control over the affairs of zemindárs, which it is proposed to vest in Government by the regulation, will, by frequent references from the local authorities, add greatly to the pressure of public business. But it will in fact save labour, because, under the present system, more of the time of Government is occupied by the disputed succession of a single zemindári, than will be by ten such cases when under their immediate authority.

Objects of the Regulation.

The objects of the Regulation are, to preserve the hereditary possessions of ancient zemindárs in their families; to preserve the respectability of such zemindárs; and to secure the country from being disturbed by family dissensions regarding the division of property, or by disputed claims to the succession to the zemindári, and the zemindárs from ruinous litigations in the Courts of Judicature. But though the maintenance of the respectability of the zemindár be an important object, a still more important one is the preservation of the peace of the country; and this alone, had every consideration for the zemindár been out of the question, would, in my opinion, be a sufficient ground for the Regulation. As far as a judgment can be formed from past experience, we shall still be occasionally liable to unavoidable disturbances from turbulent zemindárs. We should therefore be cautious not to add to the usual public causes of warfare, such as tribute and succession, those of a different description, such as the summonses and warrants of over-zealous magistrates and the rights of new purchasers. The latest disturbances in the Northern Sirkars have sprung from these causes; in Gúmsúr from enforcing the warrant of the magistrate, and in Moheri from supporting the zemindáry rights of a shroff. No honour is ever gained by these wars. The object of them is seldom attained; they usually end by a compromise of authority; they are tedious, harassing, and expensive; and, though an enemy is hardly ever seen, they are generally attended with heavy loss, not in action, but by the climate destroying or rendering unfit for all future service a great portion of the officers and troops employed in the campaign. The two battalions employed in the year 1817 and 1818 in Moheri, in supporting the rights of the shroff who had purchased the zemindáry, lost more than any two corps employed in the Mahratta war.

By adopting the Regulation we shall in a great measure obviate the recurrence of warfare for private rights and warrants. We do not relinquish the power of warrants and arrest; we only suspend it in order to ascertain whether there be cause for its exercise, and if there be, it will be rendered more efficacious by our being prepared to enforce it. No mischief can result from the delay. The zemindár has too much at stake in the country to think of absconding. He will not become more capable of resistance. It is more likely that by having time for reflection he will abandon the hasty resolutions of resisting, which he may have adopted in a moment of irritation or alarm, and submit to the orders of Government. The climate of many of the zemindáries is not unhealthy; and had this been the case in them all, the Regulation, as far as the public interest is concerned, would not have been wanted, because disturbances could have been suppressed and order maintained with very little difficulty. It is possible that at some distant period, and under some more improved state of society among the hill zemindárs, it may not be required; but it is now, and will still perhaps for some generations be necessary.*

The Regulation is calculated to prevent resistance to the law on the part of zemindárs.

* Owing to various circumstances the proposed Regulation never was passed into law; but its main object has been attained by the action of the courts, which have repeatedly held that ancient zemindáries, polliams, and jágírs are not subject to division, because, by long custom, the rule of primogeniture has been introduced and prevails in them.

The origin of the rule which takes ancient zemindáries out of the general law of partition and succession, is thus explained by Sir Thomas Strange in his "Treatise on Hindu Law":—

'When from being, as they seem 'originally to have been, managers of 'the revenue of sovereign states, ze'mindárs assumed the right of pro'prietors and some of the powers of 'independent ruling princes and chiefs 'over extensive tracts of country, those 'tracts, forming their zemindáries, came 'to be enjoyed as regalities or princi'palities, and, usage at length obtain'ing the force of law, such zemindáries 'were by analogy brought within the 'special rule which exempted the 'power and property of sovereign 'princes from the general law of suc'cession and partition.'

ON FARMING THE LAND CUSTOMS.*

28th December, 1820.

The comparative advantages of farming the land customs, and of managing them by means of Government servants, frequently discussed.

THE question of the comparative advantages of farming and of managing the customs by the revenue servants has been frequently agitated, and has again been recently brought to the Government by the Board of Revenue, in consequence of a letter from the Collector of Ballári. The farming system is recommended both by that Board and the Collector. In the discussions which took place in 1818, almost every argument which could be urged either for or against it was then brought forward, either by the Board of Revenue or by the Customs Committee, so that it is scarcely possible to say anything new upon the subject.

The renting system has been proved by experience to be less oppressive to traders.

The chief grounds on which the adoption of the renting system was not then deemed expedient, were, that the renters and their servants would not be less oppressive, or more liable to detection, than those of Government; and that the difference between the amount drawn from the pockets of the people and that paid into the treasury, would rather be increased than diminished. In the course of my own experience, I have always found fewer complaints of vexation from the servants of the renters than from those of the Collector, for the plain reason that it is against the interest of the renters to interrupt trade by vexatious exactions or delays. The greater the

* The transit or inland customs duties, to which this and the following Minute relate, except in the case of goods imported from, or exported into foreign territory, were abolished in the Madras Presidency by Act VI. of 1844. The subject may therefore be said to be obsolete; but the observations contained in the Minutes, with reference to the habits and tendencies of subordinate native officials, are probably quite as deserving of consideration at the present time as they were when they were written.

quantity of commodities that pass through his limits, the greater his profits are. He therefore endeavours to encourage traders by facilitating the transit of their goods through his district, and sometimes even by making some abatement in the rate of duty. When he ventures to exact more than the authorized rate, it is usually from some petty trader whom he does not expect to return, but who travels alone, with perhaps only one bullock. But the instances of such exactions are not frequent, and the amount of them altogether can be but very trifling. The great bulk of the commodities of the country is conveyed through it, not by single individuals, but by groups of traders and their servants, having with them sometimes only a few, sometimes five or six hundred loaded bullocks. These men know the rates of duty as well as the renters; they will not submit to any exaction, and if he attempts it, they send one of their number to complain. The renter is therefore stimulated, both by his fears and his interest, to encourage traders, and to save them from all undue exactions. The servant of the Collector is no doubt, like the renter, restrained in some degree from extortion by the fear of discovery; but as he has no interest in encouraging the trader, he is more apt to vex and harass him by unnecessary detention, and he can thus, merely by carelessness, produce a great deal of mischief without being liable to punishment.

The renting system is that which is most profitable to the revenue.

With regard to the question as to whether the difference between the amount drawn from the people and that brought into the treasury is greatest when the customs are farmed, or when they are managed by the revenue servants, it seems to be obvious enough, that if the farmer gives more than Government can realize through its own servants, the difference is least under the renting system. If it were otherwise, we must suppose that the renter makes undue exactions; but it has already been observed that there is no foundation for such an opinion. On the contrary, I am satisfied that though the servants of a renter may here and there make some trifling exaction, the sum total of his collections is almost always below what he has a right to levy by the tariff. The way in which the renter is enabled to pay more than Government receives from its own servants is, not by collecting more than they, or more than the fixed rates, but by bringing their peculations to account; for even the revenue servants rarely levy

more than the just rates. Their peculations do not arise from overcharge, but from concealment of the actual charge, and the loss falls upon the revenue, not upon the trader. As I know of no inconvenience to which trade is subjected under a customs renter, which it does not experience in a greater degree under the agent of Government, and as the renting system has been recommended by some of the most intelligent of our Collectors, as likely to increase the revenue, I have no hesitation in recommending its adoption to the Board.

Tendency of the direct system of management to corrupt the revenue servants.

One great reason which weighs with me more than any other for seeking to abandon the system of keeping the customs in our hands is, that it corrupts the whole mass of our revenue servants by the facility which it gives to peculation. The revenue servants are at all times, and under any system that can be devised, sufficiently liable to corruption. But this one of managing the customs ourselves opens such numberless easy paths to embezzlement, and is so completely unsusceptible of any efficient check or restraint, that it destroys the principles of all our revenue servants; and those employed in the land revenue are encouraged to commit frauds more frequently than they would otherwise have done, by observing the impunity that attends them in the customs.

Difficulty of preventing abuses.

It may be thought that the Collector might, by an active superintendence, prevent any serious abuses; but a little consideration will show that the greatest exertion of vigilance would be a mere unprofitable waste of time, without any corresponding useful result. In most European countries, traders, in passing with their commodities, are confined to the public roads, and are compelled by the severity of the climate to take shelter at night in towns or villages. The transit trade is, therefore, concentrated upon certain points, and a small number of revenue servants suffice to look after it. But in India the case is widely different; the travelling merchant is neither obliged to follow the high-road, nor to seek refuge in towns or villages from the weather. He can cross the country in every direction, without keeping any particular road, and he can rest in the open fields at a distance from any habitation. In the district of Ballári, for instance, the length of frontier is alone three hundred miles, and loaded bullocks may pass without any natural obstacle at every point throughout this whole extent. Travelling dealers, therefore, who avoid the road, either with the view of evading the

customs or for the sake of pasture, can pass in the night at a distance from any village, and unknown to any revenue servant, except perhaps some remote petty chaukídár.* Were there only a few points at which goods could pass the frontier, the Collector might, by a reasonable degree of vigilance, prevent the commission of any very great fraud. But as things actually are, all his labours would do very little in diminishing the abuses of which he complains. I am therefore of opinion that he should be authorized, without further delay, to rent the customs of this district; and that the Board of Revenue should be directed to introduce the farming system wherever they deem it expedient, either into a part or the whole of the districts under this Presidency.

* *Chaukídár*, a village watchman. Here means a petty customs officer.

THE SAME SUBJECT.

8th May, 1821.

Objections made to the proposal to rent the land customs.

In the answers of the Collectors to the Board of Revenue respecting the plan of renting the land customs, so many of them object to it, and upon such various grounds, that I think it will be better to give it further consideration before any final measure be adopted.

Although the objections are based upon theory, rather than upon experience, the operation of the new system should be confined to those districts in which the Collectors are in favour of it.

None of the present Collectors were in office when the system of renting the customs prevailed. They have seen them only under the management of the Government officers, and it is therefore natural that they should be alarmed, and regard the proposed change as full of danger, both to the interests of the people and of the public revenue. It is true that, in speaking of the evils likely to result from the renting system, their arguments are drawn from theory, and not from their own experience; yet, as the success of every system must mainly depend on those who are to carry it into execution, and as men seldom act well under a system which they imagine beforehand must render all their efforts for the attainment of success unavailing, it seems to be advisable that we should not urge too hastily the introduction of the renting system, but confine its operation for the present to those districts in which the Collectors are desirous of establishing it.

Nature of the principal objections urged.

The principal objections made to the change by the great majority of the Collectors are—1st, that in those districts where we have no police officers but those of the customs, it would be necessary either to relinquish the control of the police, or to keep up an establishment for that purpose alone, at a considerable expense; 2nd, that in place of saving the time of the

Collector, it would occupy more of it than the present system; 3rd, that it would diminish, rather than augment, the revenue; and, 4th, that it would occasion much interruption to trade, and prove extremely vexatious to the inhabitants. There is no doubt considerable ground for all these objections, but their prevailing or not to such an extent as to be in every case a counterpoise to the supposed benefit of the renting system, must depend upon the nature of the Collectors' management, as well as upon many local circumstances, which can only be ascertained by a fair trial of both systems.

The first objection, namely, that of our having in some zemindári districts no police officers but those of the customs, is not of much weight. These police officers, though they cease to collect the customs, may, if necessary, be kept up at the same expense as at present. But in some cases I believe they answer no useful purpose, and that they have the effect of removing the responsibility from the zemindárs, where it would be more useful, and might be discharged with advantage. Answers to the objections.

The second objection, namely, that the renting system will occupy more of the Collector's time than the present one, will, I imagine, depend upon the Collector himself. If he makes a proper choice of his renters, the customs will require much less of his time than they now do.

The third objection, namely, that the renting system would diminish the revenue, ought, if well founded, to produce its immediate rejection; but past experience, as well as a few recent offers, show that the customs yield more when rented than when under the Government officers.

The fourth objection, namely, that it would prove a hinderance to trade and vexatious to the people, is one of so serious a nature, that if it were well founded it ought to make us, without hesitation, abandon every idea of adopting the renting system. There is only one Collector who states it as his belief that the renters and their servants will be less likely than those of Government to harass the trade of the country My own experience leads me to join in the same opinion. But the best way of determining the question will be by letting a few of the Collectors make the trial of the renting system, which might afterwards be extended to other districts or not, according as their report of its effects was favourable or otherwise. The Collector of Ballári has already

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recommended its adoption in his district; and the Board of Revenue should be directed to introduce it into that, as well as into other districts, where it may appear from the report of the Collector that it may be done without inconvenience, from the beginning of the ensuing Faslí. By suspending its introduction into the other districts, the Board of Revenue will have leisure to examine all the objections which have been made to it, to suggest such remedies as may be practicable, and to consider, from its effects in a few districts, how far it may be expedient to extend it to all the rest. If the land customs could be collected at a moderate charge, and at the same time be secured from fraud, it would be better to keep them under the immediate management of the officers of Government. In proportion as the expense and the liability to fraud are great, so is the necessity of renting the customs. In districts, therefore, like Balláři, with a very extensive frontier, passable at every point and in every direction by a thousand paths, and where the collections, though made at a great charge, cannot be controlled, renting will be most necessary. In districts of very limited extent, where the collection of the customs may be easily superintended, and even in some of great extent, like Malabar and Canara, where the customs are levied chiefly upon a few staple articles at a few gháts and principal towns at a moderate expense, the renting will be less necessary, and it may probably not be found worth while in such districts to make any change.

PROPOSAL FOR ATTACHING A NATIVE ESTABLISHMENT TO THE BOARD OF REVENUE.*

9th April, 1822.

A native cutcherry necessary to enable the Board of Revenue to discharge their duties efficiently.

I HAVE long been persuaded that an establishment of native servants, similar to a Collector's cutcherry, was absolutely necessary to enable the Board to discharge with efficiency their laborious and complicated duties. A cutcherry seems to be as requisite to it as to a Collector. It is not merely in the preparation of accounts that the Collector derives advantage from his cutcherry—he has the benefit of its opinion on all matters connected with taxation and the improvement of the revenue; and there can be no good reason why the Board which presides over all revenue and directs the proceedings of Collectors, should not have the advantage of similar aid, and of every aid which can be obtained from constant communication with intelligent native revenue servants. There is no Collector, however long his experience may have been, who does not find himself obliged to make constant references to his cutcherry, for their advice in revenue affairs; and the Members of the Revenue Board, though they do not, like a Collector, enter into the execu-

* This establishment still exists. It is commonly known as the Mahratta cutcherry of the Board of Revenue. It may be doubted whether in practice the Mahratta cutcherry has proved as valuable as Sir T. Munro anticipated, and whether much of the delay which occurred in reforming the principles of the Madras revenue administration was not attributable to the influence of the sarishtadárs of the old school. Of late years the office has been held by men better educated, and with more enlightened views than their predecessors. The question now seems to be, whether the chief native adviser of the Board should not occupy a more responsible position than that assigned to the head sarishtadár—whether, in fact, the time has not come for appointing a native member of the Board of Revenue. There is certainly no office in which the co-operation of an enlightened and experienced native official, invested with definite responsibilities, and with a recognized position, would be more valuable than in the Board which superintends the entire taxation of the Presidency. The office would seem to be one to which the provisions of 33 Vict. c. 3, might be applied with special advantage.

tive details of revenue, must often, in a great variety of questions, stand as much in need as he does of the assistance of a cutcherry. They may, it is true, receive reports from the Collectors on any point on which they may call for information, but these reports are often very defective; and even where they are most perfect, every person conversant in Indian revenue must be sensible how much additional weight is added to the opinions they contain, when they are supported by the approbation of intelligent natives. By the assistance of a cutcherry many of the references which are now made to Collectors by the Board of Revenue might be obviated, and any omissions or inaccuracies in the replies of Collectors to points referred to them would be more easily discovered. The Board of Revenue, which of all public bodies ought to have the most free and constant intercourse with the native, has the least. The Sadr Court, as well as the subordinate judicial courts, has its native law officers, with whom it may consult on every question that arises. The Board of Revenue has no help of this kind, and all its proceedings must in consequence be carried on under very great disadvantages. It has no native officers with whom it can communicate on matters requiring explanation, and must often apply to a distant Collector for information, which it ought to have been enabled to obtain on the spot. By having no personal discussions on revenue affairs with a cutcherry, and by being obliged to depend entirely on a tedious correspondence with Collectors whenever explanations regarding them are wanted, the Board of Revenue has not all the means which it ought to have, of knowing the effects of our system of taxation on the country; and by being so completely cut off from communication with the people, its interest in their concerns is naturally weakened, as well as its power of correcting whatever is oppressive. The welfare of every class of the community depends so much upon the amount of the public burdens, and the manner in which they are distributed and levied, and these matters are so entirely under the direction of the Board of Revenue, that I think it would be advisable that it should have a cutcherry, if it served no other purpose than that of bringing the Board into more immediate connection with the people, so that it might be better able than it now is to learn at all times their actual condition.

Advantage of giving the Board the aid of intelligent natives.

Among the uses of this cutcherry one important end would

The proposed cutcherry would be useful on the occasion of a member of the Board, or other public officer, being deputed on special duty.

be, that it would furnish a travelling cutcherry, to accompany any Member of the Board or other public officer who might be sent to conduct an inquiry into the conduct of the local authorities in any particular district. The way in which cutcherries have been usually formed for such inquiries, has been by taking some of the ablest native servants of a Collector and subjecting him to great inconvenience, and the revenue perhaps to some loss, from their absence.

Advantage of occasional circuits by a member of the Board. Utility of native assistants on such circuits.

The advantage which might arise from occasional circuits in the provinces by a Member of the Board of Revenue has long been seen, and has been brought to the notice of Government. If he went alone, or accompanied only by revenue servants unaccustomed to such investigations, he would learn nothing. But a party from the Revenue Board cutcherry would be the most efficient assistants he could employ; because, from his being in the habit of doing business with them, he would find it easier to conduct his inquiries with their help, than with that of native servants, to whom he was a stranger, taken from the cutcherry of a Collector.

Advantage of such assistance to the Governor when visiting the provinces.

A sarishtadár from the supposed cutcherry would also be very useful in attending the Governor whenever he visited the provinces. Without a person of this description his visit would answer no public end. He might see the people and hear all their representations, but he would be unable to ascertain from a cursory examination whether they were just or not, or to form any correct judgment of the actual state of the inhabitants. It is only with the help of the native revenue servants, who have been all their lives accustomed to such inquiries, and who know how to reject all useless statements, and to compress such as are of real importance, that he would be able to make any true estimate of the real condition of the people.

Nature of the accounts to be kept in the proposed cutcherry, and language in which they are to be kept.

The duties of the cutcherry under the Board with regard to accounts should in general be similar to those of a Collector's cutcherry. It does not appear to be advisable to prescribe any set of rules on this head at present. This may be done to more advantage hereafter, when experience shall have shown what is best. Two or three general rules may, however, be adopted in the beginning. The accounts should all be in one language—the Hinduwi *—because in the peninsula it has long

* *Hinduwi*, an obsolete name for the Mahratta language.

been the language chiefly employed in the revenue accounts, and because, from so great a portion of the country being now under the British Government, it is likely to become more prevalent every day.

It is not necessary that the accounts should be in the same detail as those of a Collector, but they should descend as low as villages, and contain a statement of the land in each village, showing the quantity of sirkár and inám; of dry, wet, and garden; and of the cultivated, uncultivated, and waste of each class. They should also contain a state of the assessment by survey upon each village, under the different heads of dry, wet, and garden; and, when there has been no survey, a statement of the customary rates of assessment and of the actual collection.

Advantage of having a set of village accounts at the Presidency.

The accounts of Collectors may be destroyed by fire and other accidents. By having a set of village accounts at the Presidency, the loss will not be so much felt; but, independent of such accidents, the village accounts will always be of great use for reference and comparison at all future periods, as they will furnish a standard by which all errors and falsifications of the revenue accounts which may hereafter take place in the provinces may be corrected.

Establishment of which the proposed cutcherry is to consist.

The cutcherry ought to have two sarishtadárs,* each having a naib† and an establishment of gumáshtas.‡ The sarishtadárs should be selected from men who have served in the provinces either as sarishtadárs or naibs in the Collector's cutcherry. The naibs may be selected from men who have held any revenue office in the provinces. The sarishtadárs should be appointed and dismissed by the Board of Revenue, subject to the approbation of Government; the naibs and other servants should be appointed and dismissed at discretion by the Board of Revenue, without any reference to Government.

The pay of the senior sarishtadár may be—

That of a sarishtadár of the first class, Rs. 800 per month.

That of a junior sarishtadár may be Rs. 700 per month.

That of each of the naibs may be about Rs. 150 per month.

The annual expense of the whole cutcherry ought not to exceed Rs. 32,000; and the Board of Revenue ought to be

* *Sarishtadár*, the name commonly given to the chief native ministerial officer in an office or court.

† *Naib*, a deputy.

‡ *Gumáshta*, a native clerk.

directed to submit for the approval of Government a list of such an establishment as it may deem best calculated for the proposed cutcherry.

Mode in which the additional expense will be met.

No additional expense will be incurred by this cutcherry, because its charges will be defrayed from the savings accruing from the reductions in the judicial department. But even if there had been no judicial reductions, the whole of the expense of the cutcherry would not be an additional charge; because, as it will hereafter furnish the native servants, who have for some years past been drawn from the Collectors' cutcherries at a considerable expense, in order to assist commissioners employed in the investigation of revenue accounts, that expense will now be saved.

ALTAMGHÁ* INÁMS.

1st February, 1822.

Grant of an altamghá inám to Assim Khán.

Terms of the grant.

In 1783 Assim Khán, Diwán of the Nawáb Wallajah, obtained a jágír, which was confirmed to him by a parwána dated 27th July, 1789, 'by way of an altamghá inám' of the Kámil jamá,† of 64,000 chakrams,‡ 11 annas. The grant is in the usual form, 'to be enjoyed by him and his descendants for ever from generation to generation.' He is authorized to divide it among his descendants, and the local officers are required to consider the parwána 'as a most positive, peremptory mandate,' and not to require 'a fresh sunnud every year.' The terms employed in such documents—'for ever,'—'from generation to generation,'—or in Hindu grants—'while the sun and moon endure,'—are mere forms of expression, and are never supposed, either by the donor or the receiver, to convey the durability which they imply, or beyond the will of the sovereign. The injunction with which they usually conclude—'let them not require a fresh sunnud every year'—indicates plainly enough the opinion that such grants were not secure from revocation.

Subsequent resumption of the grant, and renewal by Lord Clive. Sanction of the Court of Directors.

This very grant to Assim Khán was resumed on the death of Wallajah by his son Omdat-ul-Omrah, but renewed by a fresh parwána, dated 30th August, 1797. On the assumption of the Carnatic by the Company, it was again resumed with other jágírs and ináms, for investigation on a change of Government, according to the usage of the country on such

* *Altamghá*, a royal grant under the seal of a prince, from the Turkish *ál*, red, and *tamghá*, a stamp. *Altamghá inám*, a grant of land free of assessment, under royal seal.

† *Kámil jamá*, the full assessment. *Kámil*, lit. perfect, complete.

‡ *Chakram*, an obsolete coin equivalent to about sixpence.

occasions. Soon after this event, and while the jágír was under resumption, Assim Khán died, in October, 1801. He left several children, for all of whom he made a liberal provision by his will, written in the September preceding his death; but he left the bulk of his fortune to his eldest son, Kalam-ullah-Khán, whom he constituted guardian to his younger children. He said nothing of his jágír in his will, because he was too well acquainted with the usage of India to believe that he had any permanent proprietary right in it, and was aware that these grants were revocable. Although, therefore, he knew that he could not claim the jágír as a right, he wrote a letter to Government, stating that he had held it by the favour of the Company. Lord Clive answered his letter, and assured him that attention would be paid to his high character; and in his Minute of the 28th May, 1802, recommended that, in conformity with the Resolutions of Government of 1790, all the country jágírs then current should be restored; and as the jágír of Assim Khán was one of them, it was restored to his eldest son, Kalam-ullah-Khán. But the grant was not for ever, and the revenue arising from salt, saltpetre, and the customs were expressly excepted; and as it was submitted to the Court of Directors and sanctioned by them, it might have been expected that it would not be shaken by any authority in this country.

Proceedings instituted in the Supreme Court by the younger sons of the original grantee.

The expectation, however, has been disappointed by the proceedings in the Supreme Court. The brothers of Kalam-ullah-Khán, instigated by certain Europeans, endeavoured to set aside their father's will on the ground of insanity; but the will was established in Court in 1813. They succeeded afterwards in establishing their claim to the personal property, according to the shares prescribed by the Mahomedan laws; but the Court twice gave a decision against their claim to a share of the jágír. They soon after filed a new bill, in which the Company were made the defendants, as well as Kalam-ullah-Khán, and in which they prayed that he might be compelled to account for the revenues of the jágír, and the Company to issue a new grant to all the brothers and sisters jointly. The Company told their law officer that they had no interest on the suit, and that it ought to be prosecuted between the parties interested. But this objection was overruled by the Court, on the ground that the Company had an interest in

the matter, and the cause was tried; but before judgment was passed, the Advocate-General, conceiving that the case was not well understood, proposed that fresh evidence should be taken on two points—1st, as to the nature of the interest conveyed by the jágír grants; and 2nd, as to the usage of native governments in the resumption of such grants. This application was refused, and judgment passed against the defendants on the 22nd May, 1820. The Court deemed that the parwánas granted by the Wallajah and Omdut-ul-Omrah are 'good, 'valid, and subsisting parwánas, and that the same are, and 'were, and have been in force ever since the resumption of the 'civil and military authority of the Carnatic by the defend-'ants; that the complainants are entitled to their several and 'respective shares of the jágír lands and villages,' and also to 'like shares of the rents, issues, and profits of such jágír lands 'and villages;' and it is also ordered 'that the said defendant 'Kalam-ullah-Khán, do account, before the Master of this 'Court, touching the said jágír lands and villages, and of the 'rents, issues, and profits thereof,' from the death of Assim Khán; and it is further declared that the 'said Kalam-ullah-'Khán hath been during all the time aforesaid, and now is, a 'trustee of the said jágír lands and villages, and of the rents, 'issues, profits, and revenue thereof, for the benefit of the com-'plainants, to the extent of their respective shares and interests 'in the same, according to the laws of Mahomedan succes-'sion.'

Decision of the Court in favour of the plaintiffs.

Resolution of the Government to appeal against the decree.

The arrears of rents decreed by the Court amounted to the enormous sum of eleven lakhs of pagodas, being the balance found by the Master, according to his report of the 27th March. The balance was found in the absence of Kalam-ullah-Khán, who, on finding himself involved in utter ruin, had fled to Pondicherry; and the report of the Master regarding it was confirmed by the Court on the 5th of April last. Previously to the confirmation of that report, an application on the part of the plaintiffs was made to the Court for the appointment of a receiver of the jágír, which the Advocate-General resisted on two grounds—1st, that the jágír being out of the jurisdiction of the Court, and the defendant having then quitted it, the Court had no authority to make such an order, the charter having restricted the Court's jurisdiction over the natives to such only as are inhabitants of Madras and its limits; and 2nd,

that if the Court had, generally speaking, such authority, yet it did not extend to this case, on account of the specific nature and incidents of the property in question involving the sirkár's share of the produce, and consequently the collection of the revenue, from the intermeddling with which the Supreme Court is, by the charter, specially interdicted. Both these objections were overruled by the Court—the first 'because 'the defendant having been originally amenable and having 'submitted to the jurisdiction, the Court had a right, by its 'process, to act upon the property anywhere within the 'Company's territories;' and the second, 'because the Govern-'ment having assigned to the defendant the jágír, it could no 'longer be regarded as public revenue, but was subject to the 'same process as any other property of the defendant'—and an order was made for the receiver. But on the Advocate-General urging the inconvenience which would result from an order so unprecedented, and intimating that there would be an appeal from the decree, it was agreed by the parties, on the recommendation of the Court, that in place of the aforesaid receiver the Collector of the district should be substituted, and should, under the orders of Government, collect the profits of the jágír lands, pay them into the public treasury with the privity of the Accountant-General of this Court, to the credit of the heirs, and subject to the further order of this Court. This course was acceded to by Government, for no other reason but that of its being the only one by which discussion with the Supreme Court could be obviated, and the Advocate-General was directed to take immediate measures for appealing the suit to England. Though Government has, therefore, already done all that it can do, I ought not, I think, to let so extraordinary a decision pass without stating individually my own sentiments upon it.

The case on the side of the Company has been so ably argued by the Advocate-General, and the long and able Minute of Mr. Thackeray has so fully explained the grounds on which the right of the Company rests in this case, that no room is left for me to add anything material to what has been already adduced; and I must therefore content myself with noticing the main arguments on which the Chief Justice founded his decision, and with stating those ancient usages of the country of which long experience has given me some

Review of the arguments advanced by the Chief Justice in support of his decision.

knowledge, and by which I am led to regard his opinion as erroneous.

Supreme Court prohibited by their charter from taking cognizance of any matter relating to the public revenue. Argument by which this prohibition is evaded. Invalidity of the argument.

The Supreme Court are by their charter expressly prohibited from taking cognizance of any matter relating to the public revenue; but in the present instance they get over this difficulty by saying that the revenue of the jágír, having been assigned to Assim Khán, was no longer revenue but private property, subject to the same laws which regulate private inheritance. If this doctrine were admitted, it would lead to the most dangerous consequences; for it would enable the Court to entertain suits against the Company in all cases of jágír, inám, or other grant of public revenue, wherever situated, on the plea that, having been granted, it is no longer public revenue. As almost all the native religious establishments and municipal servants throughout the country are maintained by grants of land, the Supreme Court might gradually extend its jurisdiction over them, destroy their respect for the authority of Government, and throw the affairs of the country into confusion. Were the Court once to begin to receive suits respecting lands assigned for the maintenance of public servants, it would be impossible for Government to realize the revenue, or to maintain good order in the country. It may be said that the Court is not likely to interfere in such matters, but of this we can have no assurance at present; for, but a few years ago, its interference in the jágír of Kalam-ullah-Khán, above a hundred miles from the limits of its jurisdiction, was regarded as at least equally improbable. There will never be wanting men whose interest it will be to bring into court, at all hazards, the jágírs and lands allotted to the civil and religious establishments of the country; and as the Court will judge for itself in determining whether these lands do or do not come under the description of what is meant as revenue by the charter, I own that I see no hope, after what has passed, of their being regarded as anything else than mere private property. The only effectual way in which the Government could be secured from the mischievous effects of the Courts extending their interference to public revenue assigned in the form of service and charity for the maintenance of various establishments, would be by restraining the Court from taking cognizance of any suit respecting any land whatever, situated beyond the limits of its jurisdiction. It is

manifest from the observations made by the Chief Justice in the course of the trial, that the notions of the Court regarding public and private lands in India were very vague, and that it must therefore be continually liable to exceed the bounds prescribed to its authority in the charter, by mistaking public revenue for private landed property. The Chief Justice says that it does not appear 'that it was not part of the private possessions of the Crown.' He thinks that the grant to Kalam-ullah-Khán is not revenue, because Lord Clive 'excepts the sáyar,* salt, and saltpetre, which are revenue.' He supposes that a private property in the land is granted, from the expressions used by the Chief Secretary, 'deliver over these lands,' and in Wallajah's grant, 'put him in possession of the parganá.' It is well known that the usual meaning of these terms is nothing more than that the desmukhs,† despándes,‡ and other public officers, shall make over the management of the village or parganá to the jágírdar, and pay him the public revenue. The sunnud says nothing of private revenue; it states clearly that what is granted is public revenue estimated, according to the Kámil jamá, or perfect or standard assessment, at 64,603 chakrams, 11 annas. Grants of land usually contain a clause saving all private rights; and when it is not inserted, it is always understood that no private, but only public rights, are transferred by the grant. It seems strange that the Chief Justice, after reading the sunnud, should have had any doubt as to what was granted being revenue. He seems to have been uncertain throughout, and sometimes to have thought that it was public revenue, and sometimes that it was not, and to have given his decision, in a cause of the highest importance, both from the magnitude of the property and the political consequences which it involved, without having any very distinct idea of the nature of the property on which he was deciding. But it is not surprising that an English judge should have believed that grants of land by the sovereign must be grants of Crown lands. It is easy, however, to show that they are not so in India; and it would have been better perhaps if the Advocate-General had more fully explained in

* *Sáyar*, customs, and other miscellaneous sources of revenue.

† *Desmukh*, a hereditary native officer under the former Governments, exercising police and revenue authority over a district.

‡ *Despánde*, a hereditary revenue accountant of a district.

what the difference consists. It may be shown in a very few words; and by defining the nature of the thing granted, the question of right will be more easily understood.

Nature of the grant defined.

If we suppose the gross produce of any village or parganá* to be 100: that of this amount, the expense of cultivation is 40; the landlord's rent or share, 20; the Government revenue or share, 40 = 100. If this village or parganá be granted as jágír, it is the 40 only, composing the Government share, which is granted. The 20 forming the landlord's rent is not granted, but remains as before in the hands of the owner; as also the 40 making the expense of cultivation, as he must defray it. If the jágír be resumed, the property of the landlord is not affected by the change; it is the 40 only, composing the Government revenue or share, which is affected by the resumption. It is paid to the Government instead of the jágírdar, in the same manner as it was before the grant. The jágírdar ceases to have any interest in the village or parganá, because he never had any property in the land, but merely in the revenue which is now resumed. Nothing can be clearer, therefore, than that wherever private proprietary right in the land exists, whatever is granted by Government must be public revenue only; and that as the grants to Kalam-ullah-Khán are of lands in the Carnatic, where all lands are the hereditary private property of the inhabitants, the thing granted was public revenue only, or the share which the proprietors paid to Government; and that there is not the smallest foundation for the supposition of the Chief Justice, that a proprietary right in the land itself, or any private property of the sovereign, was conveyed by the grant.

Variable extent of the landlord's share.

In stating the landlords' share at twenty per cent. of the gross produce, I have done so merely for the sake of illustration. It is in some provinces higher, and in others much lower, and in some so low as not to be distinguishable from the charges of cultivation.

Variable extent of the Government share.

The jágír sunnud conveys the rights of Government, whatever they are, and no more. These rights vary in different parts of the country. Wherever the lands are held, as in the Carnatic, by ryots having a hereditary proprietary right in the whole lands of the village, they are limited to the

* *Parganá*, a tract of country comprising several villages.

public revenue or Government share of the produce, and do not give a foot of land. In some provinces of India, where the lands are held by ryots having a hereditary right to the lands in cultivation, but not to the waste, the jágír sunnud gives the Government revenue, or share of the produce only, in the cultivated lands; but in the waste it gives the proprietary right in the land, whatever it may be, by the custom of the country. When such a jágír is resumed, no private rent is affected by the resumption. The ancient hereditary ryots pay the public revenue of their lands to Government in place of the jágírdar, and the jágírdar himself pays the public revenue of the waste lands which he may have brought into cultivation; and if he agrees to this condition, he retains possession of them with the same proprietary rights as the other landowners or ryots of the district. It is obvious, therefore, that though in rare cases of unclaimed or waste lands Government may confer a private proprietary right, it never resumes it; and that there is no foundation for the opinion that resumption is an unjust violation of private property, since the thing resumed is always public revenue —never the landlord's rent.

Necessity for the explanation.

This long explanation respecting Indian grants will appear unnecessary to those who are conversant with the subject; but as the Chief Justice certainly never understood clearly what was the precise nature of the thing granted, and as the main part of his argument rests upon its having been private property, it became indispensably requisite to show at the outset that it was not private property, but exclusively public revenue.

The thing granted being public revenue, and the grant being the political act of the Company, the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction.

As the thing granted was public revenue, and as the grant itself was a political act of the Company in their sovereign capacity, the cognizance of it was on both grounds beyond the jurisdiction of the Court. But the Court has set the Company's grant aside, and decreed that the parwaná of Wallajah to Assim Khán is 'a good and subsisting grant.' If it is a good and subsisting grant, it ought to be so wholly, and not partially; it ought to be good for the salt and customs, as well as for the land. The decree of the Court has altered the nature of the grant altogether. It ought to have confirmed either the grant of the Company or of the Nawáb. It has done neither. It has set aside the Company's grant, but has not restored the Nawáb's. It has given to the parties the land, but not the salt

and customs; and as the Chief Justice says that this is because these articles are revenue, we may infer that his decree is grounded on the belief that the private property only, and not revenue, was granted with the land. It may likewise be observed that the decree has deviated in another point from the Nawáb's grant. By that grant it is required that a division of the jágír shall be made whenever Assim Khán requires it. To make the division or not is left optional with him. But he never made it, and most probably never intended it, for he makes no mention of any such design in his address to Lord Clive; and his whole conduct to Kalam-ullah-Khán, as well as his last will, leave no doubt that he wished, after allowing a moderate provision for his other children, that the rest of his property should go undivided to his eldest son, as the only way in which the rank and character of his family could be preserved.

All the circumstances connected with the grant prove that it was a political act.

All the circumstances connected with the grant of Wallajah, as well as with that of the Company, show that they were of a political nature, and not properly cognizable by the Court. The grant of Wallajah to Assim Khán was a grant by the sovereign of the Carnatic to his minister, as a reward for his long and faithful political services. When the Company succeeded to the government of the Carnatic, they granted the jágír of Assim Khán to his son Kalam-ullah-Khán. But in so doing they acted in their political capacity in concurrence with the Nawáb; and a little attention to some of the articles of the treaty of 1801 will show that the regulating, not only of Kalam-ullah-Khán's jágír, but of all the other jágírs, was a measure of State, independent of the jurisdiction of every municipal Court.

Proofs adduced from the treaty of 1801.

By the 1st article, 'the Nawáb Azim-ul-Dowlah Bahádúr 'is formally established in the state and rank, with the dignities 'dependent thereon, of his ancestors.' By the 3rd article, the Company 'charges itself with the maintenance and support of 'the military force necessary for the defence of the Carnatic, 'and further protection of the rights, person, and property of 'the said Nawáb;' and 'the said Nawáb stipulates that he will 'not enter upon any negotiation or correspondence with any 'European or native power,' &c. By this the Nawáb does not relinquish his sovereignty—he merely renews the articles of former treaties, by which he engaged not to correspond with

foreign states without the consent of the Company. By the 5th article, 'one fifth part of the net revenue of the 'Carnatic is allotted for the maintenance and support of the 'said Nawáb.' This fifth part is his claim as sovereign of the whole Carnatic; it is the revenue which remains after providing for the civil and military charges, and is probably as large a clear revenue as was received by any of his ancestors. By the 6th article, the one-fifth is to be calculated—after deducting, first, all charges of collecting; secondly, the amount of the jágír lands stated in the 9th article of the treaty of 1787—at pagodas 2,13,421, and the sum of pagodas 6,21,105 appropriable to the liquidation of the debts of the late Mahomed Ali. By the 9th article, the Company 'engages to take into consider'ation the actual situation of the principal officers of his late 'Highness's Government, and charges itself with the expense 'of a suitable provision for their maintenance, to be distributed 'with the knowledge of the said Nawáb, in such manner as 'shall be judged proper.' By this article it appears that the Company, in conjunction with the Nawáb, may regulate the provision for the officers as it thinks proper; and by the second separate article it is stipulated that it shall not be incumbent on the Honourable Company to appropriate lands yielding a revenue to the said amount of pagodas 2,13,421, 'but that the 'said Company shall be at liberty to exercise its discretion on 'the mode and on the extent of the provision to be made.' By the 10th article, the rank of the Nawáb, as a prince and as an ally of the British Government, is declared. No change in the political situation of the Nawáb has taken place since 1801. He is still Prince of the Carnatic; he is a party to the treaty by which one-fifth of the net revenue is secured to him. Without a breach of the treaty we cannot, except with his consent, alter any of the articles. By one of these articles we are bound to provide for the dependants of the Nawáb, and among them of Kalam-ullah-Khán. The Nawáb concurred in the provision made for him; if we take it away without the Nawáb's consent, it is a breach of the treaty which is cognizable by the Government at home, but not by the Supreme Court here. The question is not one of private right between two brothers, as maintained by the Chief Justice, but one of State policy, whether a public grant confirmed by treaty shall or shall not be set aside by a municipal court. If the Court has

The question at issue is a question of State policy, which is not cognizable by the Supreme Court.

jurisdiction in any jágír included in an article of a treaty, it must have it equally with regard to all the other jágírs; and if it can alter any of the provisions of an article, it may, on the same principle, set aside the whole treaty.

Doubtful whether the Supreme Court can legally exercise jurisdiction over the Carnatic, even in cases of private property.

I doubt whether the Supreme Court can legally exercise jurisdiction in the Carnatic, even in cases of private property. Had the Nawáb retained the civil administration it certainly could not have done so; neither could it have done so under a temporary assumption, similar to what has occurred in former periods. The present assumption of the country is more permanent, but the relative situation of the Company and the Nawáb is the same as in former cases of assumption. The Nawáb is still Prince of the Carnatic, receives in that capacity one-fifth of its net revenue, and has a right to object to any measure which, by the increase of grants or otherwise, may tend to the diminution of his dues. But if the Company, with the concurrence of the Nawáb, were to resume a grant of land or money, and if the Court were to consider the grant as private property and decree against the resumption, it is obvious that the revenue of the Nawáb would be injured thereby. There are many other cases in which the decrees of the Court might be at variance with the rights of the Nawáb; and whatever, therefore, may be thought of the expediency of the Supreme Court having jurisdiction in the Carnatic in matters of private property where the claim is against the Government or any of its officers, it would be advisable that it should have none in matters of private property where the Nawáb and the Company have a common interest.

Incorrectness of the view held by the Chief Justice as to the political status of the Company.

The Chief Justice denies the sovereignty of the Company, and considers the words of Lord Thurlow as a clear authority against their being regarded as a sovereign power, except in the case of a dispute with a sovereign relative to peace and war with pagan states. Whether the Company have or have not either an independent or delegated sovereignty in the technical sense that the Chief Justice or Lord Thurlow may have affixed to the expression, is of little consequence; for, though the sovereignty be reserved to the Crown, all the powers of the State, by the present constitution of things, as far as regards the natives of the country, are exercised by the Company. They make peace and war, raise and maintain armies, have articles of war for enforcing their discipline,

acquire and cede territories, impose and collect taxes, and make laws founded on ancient usage, for the administration of the affairs of the country. The Chief Justice, after arguing that the Company can act as sovereign only in the two points of making war and peace, admits that the Nawábs exercised 'absolute and uncontrolled authority,' and that the Company 'have the same rights as the Nawábs of the Carnatic.' He says, if the Advocate-General can make out that the Omdat's son would have had a right to resume the grant made by his father and grandfather, 'I admit the Company has the same 'right; and this, after all, seems the great point in the case.' It is unquestionably the main point at issue between the parties; but the Chief Justice had decided that the Omdat's son could not resume the jágír of Assim Khán, and of course that the Company could not resume it, either from the reason of the thing, or by the custom and usage of the country, or by the Mahomedan law.

There is no analogy between the position of the Sovereign in England and that of the Government of India as to the power of resuming grants.

What the Chief Justice says, of the kings of England not having the power of resuming grants, has no analogy to the present case. The kings of England durst not, could not, resume these grants. They would have been opposed by their barons and churchmen who chiefly enjoyed them. The kings of England gave up private landed property, but this did not affect the public revenue. These Crown grants were not, like Indian grants, exempted from contribution to the public revenue. Though lost to the king as private property, they contributed like other lands to the national revenue. The land revenue in India is what the excise and customs are in England—the main source of revenue, and cannot be permanently alienated with safety to the State. The kings of England never could alienate the public revenue in perpetuity, nor could any government do so. No government can debar its successors from the use of the public revenue; the existing government must always have the power of calling it forth for the preservation and defence of the State. In India there is no assembly or public body between the prince and the people, to regulate the rate or amount of the taxation or revenue. The sovereign himself is the only authority by which revenue is levied and disbursed, and by which it is granted or resumed. The power to resume, as well as to grant, must be lodged somewhere, and in India, where there is no other authority, it is

obvious that it must be vested in the prince. But this is denied, because opinions are drawn from European institutions, and strained analogies are found where none exist, between the usages of India and Europe; and hence the Chief Justice observes that 'he cannot see how any argument can be derived 'from the particular situation of the Nawáb of the Carnatic, 'which shall on general reasoning deprive him of the same right 'to alienate the revenues of the State as was actually enjoyed 'by the kings and queens of England.'

No Crown lands in India. All grants of jágírs are grants of the public revenue.

This is not a correct view of the case. The kings of England could not alienate the great sources of the public revenue in perpetuity; they could grant their Crown lands, but not the public revenue upon them. But the alienation by the Nawáb is that of the public revenue of extensive districts. The alienation in England was merely a transfer of the Crown lands to private individuals, to be liable to all the public taxes. The alienation by an Indian prince was a transfer from the State of all public taxes on land to individuals as private property. The Chief Justice does not appear to have perceived the distinction in the nature of English and Indian grants, for in speaking of the grant to Assim Khán, he says, 'It ought to 'appear that it was property belonging to the public, or at least 'that it was not part of the private possessions of the Crown." It has already been shown that all grants of jágírs in India are grants of public revenue; they cannot indeed be otherwise, because there are no Crown lands. The Chief Justice is evidently acting all along under the influence of English analogies, and endeavouring to find a resemblance in things which have not the remotest connection. He thinks that because the sovereigns of Europe, under the feudal system, possessed extensive Crown lands, the sovereigns of India must, from their being more despotic, have had still more extensive private domains; but nothing can be more unfounded than such an opinion. Crown lands, according to the English acceptation of the term, are unknown in India. The most powerful monarchs had none. Neither Akbar nor Árangzíb had any, and the despotism of the sovereign was itself the very cause of there being none; because, by giving him unlimited control over all land throughout the empire, it rendered the aid of any private domain altogether unnecessary. A small part of the public revenue arose from customs; the

rest, about nine-tenths of the whole, from the land revenue or tax. All land was assessed to the public revenue. A part of the land was allotted to religious and charitable purposes, and to municipal institutions, and the public revenue of such lands was enjoyed by the incumbents. But the public revenue of all other land came to the royal treasury, unless when assignments of particular villages or districts were made to civil and military officers for their personal allowance, and the pay of their respective establishments, all which assignments, however, varied or ceased at the will of the sovereign. As there was no public body, no class of nobles or clergy, which had any right to interfere in the settlement of the land-tax; as this power was vested in the sovereign alone; and as he could raise or lower the tax as he saw proper, and the whole produce was at his disposal, it is manifest that he could derive no advantage, and therefore have no motive for holding, as 'private possessions of the Crown,' any lands apart from the general mass of the sirkár or Government lands of the Empire; and it is also obvious that, whenever he granted land rent-free, he granted the public revenue.

Distinction between alienations of public revenue in India and grants of Crown lands in England.

The Chief Justice says that if we are to argue from 'the reason of the thing,' one may have recourse to the history of our own country, where he shows that it was declared by the twelve judges, as late as the time of King William, that it was the ancient and undoubted right of the Crown to alienate its hereditary estates; and he hence infers that the Nawáb of the Carnatic must have the same right. This argument would be very just, if the estates alienated in England and the Carnatic were of the same nature; but as they are totally different, it is not at all applicable. The king of England might, without injury to the nation, alienate his hereditary estates. The owners were changed, but the estates themselves were still liable, like the other lands of the kingdom, to all the public burdens of the time—to military service, aids, escuage, &c. By the transfer the Crown became poorer, but the nation richer. But an Indian grant is the reverse of all this. It gives away the public revenue of the lands; it exempts them from military service, from every kind of tax or public burden, and renders them entirely useless as a resource to the State. In England the alienation of the Crown lands does not lessen the resources of the State; in India it annihilates them. In England the

effect of such alienation could only have been partial, as the Crown lands bore but a small proportion to the lands of the kingdom; in India it might have extinguished all revenue, as the sovereign, though he has no Crown lands, has the power of granting all lands.*

The claim of the Government in India to resume grants does not extend to private property, but only to public revenue.

The Chief Justice observes that it was not in the contemplation of the great men who investigated the subject of the Crown grants when Queen Anne ascended to the throne, to remedy the evil by their resumption. He thinks that this moderation furnishes a contrast with the conduct of the Company's Government. But this Government has never claimed a right to make a resumption at all, similar to what a resumption of the Crown lands of England would be. It does not claim to resume any private property conveyed by the grants; it claims the public revenue only, and leaves the rent of the landlord with the proprietor.

Reasons for concluding that every Indian sovereign had a right to resume, as well as to grant, jágírs.

If all Indian princes could grant altamghá jágírs, and if none could resume them, a great portion of the country might in time be released from affording any aid to the State, either in revenue or in military service. Some idea may be formed of the probable effect of such a system by looking at what happened, in the course of a few years, under the Nawábs Wallajah and his son Omdat-ul-Omrah. Family jágírs were granted to the amount of above six lakhs of pagodas, and containing a population of above six hundred thousand persons. Of these jágírs, only about one-fourth was altamghá; but the whole might have been so, and the State would have been deprived of every kind of aid from more than half a million of its subjects. Many of these jágírs, too, might have been held, as was actually the case, by persons who, though attached to the donor, were inimical to his predecessor; but when once granted they could not, according to the opinion of the Court, have been resumed. If, therefore, the increase of altamghás during successive reigns might, if not checked, have materially impaired or altogether exhausted the resources of the State, and as the evil could only be remedied by resumption, it seems to follow from the reason of the thing that the sovereign must have had the right to resume as well as to grant.

* This expression conveys more than Munro intended. Read in connection with the rest of the Minute, it evidently refers to the alienation of the land revenue, not to the alienation of the land itself.

Right of resumption in accordance with general usage.

The next ground on which the Company's right to resume the grant to Assim Khán has been denied by the Court, is that of the usage and custom of the country. The usage of the country is undoubtedly the rule by which the question ought to be decided; and in a case of this kind, the common practice of the native princes must be admitted to be the usage. It can easily be shown that princes resumed altamghás at pleasure; it cannot be shown that when they were disposed to resume, the act of resumption ever was, or could be, prevented. It may be said that they were despotic, and acted unjustly. Had they seized private property, they would have been regarded as unjust by the country; but no injustice was attached to the seizure of the altamghá, as the people knew that it was a grant of public revenue. The princes were, it is true, despotic; but they were liberal and profuse in their grants: and the grants themselves grew out of their very despotism, for it was because they found no difficulty in resuming that they made none in granting. Altamghás were not in fact more respected than money pensions, which, though every day liable to resumption, are frequently continued for generations. The resumption and renewal by the Nawáb Omdut of the grant to Assim Khán, the favourite minister of his father and himself, is a strong proof of the practice of the country, and of the opinion of the public. If altamghás were not resumable, it may be asked, what has become of them? Their very scarcity is a proof of the usage to the contrary. There is not one in the Carnatic older than Wallajah. Where are all those of his predecessors, which, according to the Chief Justice, ought to have been protected by usage and by the Mahomedan Law? The right of resumption never was doubted in the Carnatic till called in question by the Supreme Court. The Company's Government could have had no doubt of it when, in 1801, they resumed all jágírs, though they afterwards continued most of the old ones, but none of the altamghás, to the Nawáb's family. The usage is shown by Wallajah himself, who certainly best knew what it was in his own dominions. But his opinion is in direct opposition to that of the Court. In his letter to Government of the 18th October, 1790, he says, 'I am Prince 'of the Carnatic, and for these forty years I have granted, 'resumed, and altered jágírs from time to time, in such

'manner as I have thought proper.' The right of resumption is in native states the usage and the constitution, and it ceases only when the Government is too weak to enforce it; and when this happens, the Government is soon overthrown, and a new one arises and maintains itself by exercising the right of grant and resumption.

Instances of the resumption of altamghá grants.

It is not easy to collect written documents respecting altamghás, because most of these grants have long since been resumed; but enough still remain to show what were the opinions of the Nizam and Wallajah on the subject, and their practice ought certainly to be received as the best proof of what was the usage of the country. The Nizam granted altamghá sunnuds to several members of Wallajah's family, and resumed them again. On the death of Omdat-ul-Omrah, the Nizam resumed the altamghá jágír which he held of him, and re-granted it to his successor, Azim-ul-Dowlah; on whose decease he resumed it again. The jágír of Aimangundla was held many years by Hisám-ul-Mulk, the third son of the Nawáb Wallajah, under an altamghá grant from the Nizam; as was also the Kiladri of Ghanpura, under a similar sunnud, by his younger brother Nasar-ul-Mulk; but on the death of Nawáb Omdat-ul-Omrah, both these grants were resumed by the same subahdar of the Deccan who had granted them, and conferred by a new sunnud on the late Nawáb Azim-ul-Dowlah. Wallajah was so sensible of the little respect paid to altamghás, that when he granted one to Rais-ul-Nissa Begum, he made his son, Omdat, put his seal and signature to it, as affording the only chance of its being continued after his own death. No case can evince more strongly the insecurity of altamghás beyond the pleasure of the donor, than this of a father requiring confirmation from a son to such a grant. But notwithstanding all this precaution, the grant was soon after the death of the Wallajah resumed by the Omdat, in consequence of the conduct of the officer placed in charge of the estate by the Begum, and was not restored until she had consented to dismiss him from her service.

Want of confidence in the permanency of altamghá grants exhibited by the Nawáb Wallajah.

Wallajah had no confidence in altamghás, since, though he had obtained one from Ahmad Shah, Emperor of Delhi, for the Carnatic, he did not think it sufficient, and afterwards solicited and obtained similar grants from Sálabat Jang and Nizam Ali Khán, subahdars of the Deccan. The very circumstance of

such extensive provinces as the Deccan and the Carnatic being disposed of by altamghá sunnuds, indicates clearly the political nature of these grants; and Wallajah's application to every succeeding superior for a new one shows that he considered them as liable to be resumed at pleasure. He knew that this must either be the case, or that they must be maintained by force. The usage in this respect has probably arisen from necessity; for as altamghás are chiefly given to members of the reigning family and to the higher officers of State, and as they are usually for extensive districts, it is obvious that in every case of a new dynasty, and in every instance of disputed succession in an old one—which is so common in India—the new prince could not be secure unless he had the power of redeeming the altamghás of all whom he supposed were not well affected, and of rewarding his adherents by new grants. This has been the usage with regard to all larger grants. The small ones of a few hundred rupees are from their insignificance sometimes neglected, and allowed, like charity lands, to pass through several generations.

Resumption more common in the case of altamghá grants than in the case of other grants.

There is nothing either in existing records, or in the state of the country, to support the opinion that altamghás were not resumable at pleasure. The altamghá was so far different from a common grant, that it was not for any specific grant, and that it frequently, but not always, contained the words, 'from generation to generation.' It was therefore a grant which the donor was anxious should be durable, and his son might on this account continue it, if he had no cause of being dissatisfied with the jágírdar; but the next prince could hardly show the same forbearance, as he would probably have new favourites to provide for by the resumption of old grants. If we examine Mr. Falconer's report on the jágírs of the Carnatic, we find no old altamghás in the list. The whole of the altamghás, sixteen in number, are by Wallajah and his son. The old grants which have passed through several generations are not altamghá, as might have been expected from the principle of their not being resumable, but common jágír grants; neither hereditary, nor for life, but temporary. Many of these common jágírdars were kiladárs of strong forts, and, from this circumstance, held their jágírs longer than they would probably have done under the dynasty by which they were granted; because, in the convulsions attending the

decline of the Moghul power, their forts enabled them to secure terms for themselves. But even after the new governments became strong, and could easily have removed them, they frequently permitted them to remain, either on account of family alliances, or of respect for their high birth, or some other cause. The greater part of the jágírs of Assim Khán was held under a royal firman, not altamghá, by Mulk Mahomed Ali Khán, with the fort of Mustaphanagar. Though the grant was merely temporary, yet it continued in the family, and descended lineally from father to son for three generations, until 1780, when, the jágírdar having died during Hyder Ali's invasion of the Carnatic, his family was sent into captivity in Mysore by that prince. The jágír of Amalconda, and several others held by the common tenure, have in the same way descended through several generations. It appears from these facts that in the Carnatic, altamghá grants, so far from being irresumable, have not been so much respected as many of the ordinary jágírs.

Practice in other parts of India.

It would not weaken the argument, even if it could be shown that in other parts of India the practice was different, because the question before us regards the usage in the Carnatic only. But I believe that it was nearly the same throughout India. We know at least that it was so in the Peshwa's dominions, for the commissioner at Poonah, in answer to a reference made to him on the subject, has stated that he has not been able to find a single altamghá in the Deccan, and has transmitted a list of 559 jágírs resumed by the Peshwa's Government, within the last fifty years, none of which are altamghá. Of these, he observes, 364 were resumed for reason assigned, usually offences against the State, and 195 without any reason assigned. In the Nizam's dominions, too, the resumption of jágírs appears, from the note of his minister, Chandú Lál, transmitted by the Resident, to have been regulated, as in the Carnatic, by the will of the Prince. It is stated that 'altamghá jágírs, which are granted to children generally, 'without any specification of names, are continued to the 'descendants of the deceased person; but if any great fault 'has been committed, or there are no descendants, the jágír is 'resumed.' It is also stated that the sons sometimes share equally; 'but if one is found fit, and another unfit, the 'sovereign exercises a discretion and continues the jágír as he

'may think proper, in consideration of the merits of the per- 'sons;' and it is added, 'There are no persons to whom jágírs 'have been continued without some change or modification.' What is here said corresponds very nearly with the practice of the Company and the Nawáb in the Carnatic, with regard to the jágírs of Kalam-ullah-Khán, and others. When any great fault is committed, the jágír is resumed. The sovereign exercises his discretion in renewing or continuing the jágír to all the sons, or to one son in preference, and no jágírs are continued without some change.

The next ground on which the Chief Justice maintains that altamghás are not resumable, is that of the Mahomedan law. The Advocate-General cites Mahomedan law authorities to show that the king has power to grant or resume khiráj, or the sirkár's share of the produce of the land. The Chief Justice did not think that the authorities cited by the Advocate-General forbidding the alienation in perpetuity were conclusive, but admitted that if he had adduced instances of similar grants having been resumed, it would have greatly aided his case. The Advocate-General, had time been allowed, might easily have adduced instances of similar grants in the Nawáb's own family having been resumed by the Nizam. The law officers of the Sadr Adálat, in answer to the queries from the Advocate-General, observe in speaking of the Mahomedan law authorities 'respecting lands belonging to 'the State, and the private property of princes,' that there 'is 'so much discrepancy of opinion among these learned person- 'ages respecting the legality or illegality of grants of land, and 'of the revenues of land belonging to the State, by the sovereign 'to individuals, that it is next to impossible to come to any 'determination, or to arrive at any satisfactory conclusion.' The discrepancy here complained of is not to be wondered at. It could not have been otherwise; for, as no person had ever seen the Mahomedan law applied in the case, the question was not one concerning any practical matter of fact, but was one of mere theory, as to what would be the operation of the Mahomedan law, if made applicable where it had never before been permitted to enter. As it was never used in the continuance or resumption of altamghás by the sovereign, every attempt to ascertain its operation must always bring us back to the usage of the country, by which alone the transaction

Question of resumption not one of law, but of usage.

was regulated. The Indian princes consult no law either in granting or resuming; they grant from favour or political expediency, and resume at pleasure. Their right to resume is never questioned, and as there is no tribunal that can take cognizance of it, it is evident that it is regulated by no law but their will. If it be said that this right, though it could not be denied or opposed, was not exercised, we shall find that this assumption is not supported by facts, and that it is at variance with the usage of the country. It is useless to consult Mahomedan lawyers regarding this usage, for the resumption of grants is a question which was never submitted to them by any sovereign; and when we seek any legal opinions on matters of policy which never were or ought to be subjected to legal discussion, we must expect endless conflicting opinions, all equally well supported by texts and quotations from Mahomedan and Hindu law. It is not necessary to go to Arabia or Hindustan to discover the usage of the country; we ought to search for it on the spot in the south of India, and look for it in the history of the Deccan and the Carnatic. If we adopt this course, we shall see, as has already been observed, that altamghá grants were not more inviolable than common jágírs. If they were, what has become of them all? There are none in Mysore, none in the Ceded Districts, and none in the Carnatic of an earlier period than a few years before the death of Wallajah. We must admit either that former princes in these countries never granted altamghás, or that they have been all resumed. But we have no reason to suppose that altamghás were not granted under former princes, or to doubt that their disappearance is owing to their having been resumed by their successors. It was, in fact, because such resumptions were considered as an ordinary transaction, that they excited little attention and were soon forgotten, and the very record of them lost. It has been seen that altamghá and all other jágírs were resumed; it ought to have been shown by those who disputed the right of the Nawáb and the Company to dispose of the jágír of Assim Khán, when and where resumption was, or could be, hindered by the Mahomedan law.

Right of resumption not barred by Lord Clive's proclamation.

The last ground of objection made by the Chief Justice to the resumption of Assim Khán's jágír is Lord Clive's proclamation. He remarks that it has been argued that by the

words of the proclamation, 'all jágírdars may rest satisfied that their interest will sustain no injury from the temporary arrangement made by the Company,' that Lord Clive renounced his rights if he had any to resume. He states also that the words of the regrant have raised in his mind, as in that of the Sadr Adálat at Calcutta, a strong doubt whether Lord Clive did himself intend to resume the grant in question at all. The proclamation of Lord Clive cannot be regarded as anything more than a general assurance of the attention to the interests of the jágírdars. This was fulfilled by allotting a provision for them. But the assurance was not intended to preclude Lord Clive from exercising the authority always exercised by the Nawáb, of limiting or extending the jágírs at discretion. Lord Clive was the best judge of his own intentions; and if we are to judge of them from his acts, he leaves us no ground to join in the doubts of the Chief Justice. He certainly did intend to resume the grant, for he resumed the customs, salt, and saltpetre belonging to the jágírs, and continued the land-rent only; and the new grant which he issued for the land-rent was not a renewal of the old altamghá, but a common jágír grant to Kalam-ullah-Khán, as the heir of Assim Khán. It was not in the name of the other sons and heirs, because Lord Clive knew that Assim Khán was desirous that the jágír should be conferred on his eldest son. His lordship also knew that it was only on account of the high character and long services of Assim Khán that the jágír had been originally granted; that the respectability of the family could only be maintained by giving the undivided jágír to the eldest son; and that the Nawáb approved of the measure. The original grants, both of Wallajah and of the Omdat, left the division of the jágír to Assim Khán, to be made as he choose; and he never expressed a wish to make any. The sunnud of Lord Clive states expressly that it is on account of 'the respectable character and commendable 'conduct of the said bahádúr' (Assim Khan), and a well-founded expectation that his son Kalam-ullah-Khán 'will 'pursue the same laudable line of conduct,' that the jágír is renewed.

I expect that the answers to the queries respecting the altamghás transmitted to various public officers will contain different opinions as to their being resumable or not. They

It is probable that the opinions of local officers will vary on the subject.

Causes of this variance.

will vary according as they are founded on the usage of one province or another, or on the opinions of native lawyers, or on extensive or limited observation. We are too apt to be carried away by supposed analogies, and to build up systems of uniform practice where none ever existed or ever was thought of; and much of the argument on the present occasion seems to have arisen from this cause. The conflicting opinions may be easily accounted for by considering what really took place. The small altamghás were frequently neglected on account of their insignificance, and allowed, like common charity or inám lands, to continue for two or three generations, and to be regulated by the laws of private property. But the greater altamghás were, from their value, objects of State policy, and were resumed or transferred at the discretion of the sovereign, to punish one person or to reward another. They could not be left as private property without danger to the State.

Summing up of the question.

I have now delivered my sentiments on the principal objections made by the Chief Justice to Lord Clive's grant to Kalam-ullah-Khán. The sum of what I have said is this: That the grant of the Omdat to Assim Khán was resumed by Lord Clive; that the grant by his lordship to Kalam-ullah-Khán was a new grant, different in its nature from the old one by the Nawáb; that the Nawáb of the Carnatic had a right to resume the altamghá of Assim Khan, and that the Company's Government had the same right; that this right was founded in the reason of the thing and in the custom of the country; that it was not affected by the Mahomedan law of inheritance; that this law was applicable only between individuals where the sovereign permitted the altamghá to descend in this way in the family, not between the sovereign and the individual where it was resumed; that the thing granted to Kalam-ullah-Khán was public revenue, from all cognizance of which the Court are precluded by their charter; and that, even if it had not been public revenue, the resumption was an affair of State, which, whether right or wrong, did not come within the jurisdiction of the Court, and for which, as well as for all other political acts, the Government in this country are amenable only to the superior Government at home.

Although Government at the commencement of the trial

in the Supreme Court were not fully aware of the important political considerations which it involved, they soon saw them; and on the 8th January, 1819, they tell the Advocate-General that they 'attach a high degree of importance to the 'principles in dispute'—'the right of the Supreme Court to 'take cognizance of the matter, and, secondly, the denial of the 'authority of Government to revoke grants of the nature of 'that now called in question.' It is absolutely necessary, both for the good government of the country and the security of the revenue, that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court should be more strictly limited and more clearly defined, and that it should be completely debarred from all cognizance in any shape of the acts of Government. If the Supreme Court are permitted to set aside by their decrees the orders of Government, we shall weaken, and at last perhaps destroy, that authority which our own safety demands should in this country be strengthened by every possible means. The proceedings of the Court on the present occasion have ruined the first private family in the Carnatic, and lowered the Government in the eyes of the people; and if measures of prevention be not adopted, the evil will increase every day. Most of the old wealthy families of Madras have already been impoverished by their litigation in the Court. The attorneys and law dubashes now look to the provinces; and if the doctrine maintained by the Court continues to be acted upon, its jurisdiction will in time reach to every zemindár, jágírdár, and official landholder under this Presidency, because Madras being the capital, many of the great proprietors and principal inhabitants will occasionally visit this place, and reside in it for a time, and thus become amenable; and every person also holding an official or charitable grant, which it may be deemed expedient to assess or resume, will be able to bring his case before the Court as a complaint against European oppression. The powers of the Supreme Court and of the Government should never be suffered to come into collision; and both the Court and the Government will thus be enabled the more effectually to discharge their respective duties, and to command the respect of the natives.

Necessity for debarring the Supreme Court from interfering in affairs of State.

But in order to attain these objects it will be necessary (1) to exclude from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court all civil suits between native and native, except where both

Proposed restrictions of the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.

parties agree to submit to their decision; (2) to alter the present boundaries of the local jurisdiction of the Supreme Court so as to include the fort and town of Madraspatnam, but to exclude Chepák and Triplicane; (3) to exclude from the jurisdiction of the Court all grants of land or public revenue, of whatever denomination; (4) to exclude from the jurisdiction of the Court all lands situated beyond the limits of the Court; (5) to exclude from the jurisdiction of the Court all acts done by the Government as a Government, and making such acts cognizable only by the superior authorities in England; (6) to vest in Government the powers now exercised by the Justices, of assessing the inhabitants of Madras for paving, lighting, and cleaning the streets, or at least to vest in it the power of exempting from the tax all such Brahmans, priests, and other privileged persons, as, from the usage of the country, are exempted from such taxes.*

Grounds for the restriction.

If suits between native and native are excluded from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court, it will check litigation, and lessen greatly the expense where it actually occurs, and save thousands from ruin. The local boundaries of the Supreme Court are far too extensive; they seem to have been fixed at first without much consideration. They reach a distance of five miles from Madras, and include several populous villages, which ought never to have been within them. They contain a population of above 500,000 persons. The line proposed by Mr. Stratton ought to be the new boundary. It runs along the river at the Government House to Cochrane's canal, and would place about 200,000 natives under the jurisdiction of the Company's Courts. It would also enable us to accomplish a most important object in withdrawing the Nawáb, with all

* Of the suggestions made in this paragraph, the first and second have never been acted on. The third was practically met by the decree of the Privy Council, to which reference is made in the note at the end of this Minute. The sixth was carried out by the enactment of Act XXVIII. of 1836, which declared that no assessment made by the justices of the peace should be levied until approved by the Governor in Council. All municipal taxation in Madras is now levied by the Municipal Commissioners, under (Madras) Acts IX. of 1867 and V. of 1871, but requires the previous sanction of the Government. In regard to the remaining suggestions, it may be observed, that the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court over land situated beyond its local jurisdiction has never been admitted. Such jurisdiction, in the case of the High Court, which has taken the place of the Supreme Court, is expressly barred by the letters patent constituting the Court. It has also been decided that the Supreme Court was barred by the provisions of 21 Geo. III. c. 70, ss. 1 and 2, extended to Madras by 39 & 40 Geo. III. c. 79, from exercising jurisdiction over any act done by the Government as a Government.

his relatives and adherents, from the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. That jurisdiction has for many years been a source of constant complaint from his Highness. While it exists, it cannot be otherwise, for, whatever may be the forbearance of the judges and their attention to native prejudices, circumstances must occur almost every day offensive to the Nawáb and to every Mussulman of rank. The authority of the Nawáb over his family and dependents has been impaired by political events, and still more by the interference of the officers of the Court. Daughters of Wallajah have turned prostitutes, and been released from the custody of their husbands and the Nawáb by Habeas Corpus. Other women of rank have been encouraged by their example and their impunity to follow the same courses. The disgrace of their women is felt, not only by their own families, but by every Mussulman here, as a degradation of their caste. The Mussulman population of Triplicane, always distressed and dissatisfied since the assumption of the Carnatic, has had its discontent increased by these transactions; and it is therefore desirable that the cause of them should be removed, by placing the Nawáb without the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court. It is also chiefly for the purpose of removing the causes of discontent that I have proposed that Government, rather than the justices, should possess the authority of taxing the inhabitants of Madras for paving, cleaning, and lighting the streets. The majority of the justices is composed of men either not in the Company's service, or who, having always resided at Madras, know little of the native usages. Brahmans, priests, and other privileged persons have in consequence been subjected to this house-tax, from which they are everywhere else exempted by the custom of the country, and the Hindu population has been rendered discontented as well as the Mahomedan. The discontent has shown itself only in complaint and clamour; but for this we are indebted to the presence of a military force. Had the same measures been attempted to be carried into execution where there was none, they would have been resisted by insurrection. The Advocate-General has given it as his opinion that Government has no authority over the assessment, as it is by the Act of Parliament committed to the justices alone. Government has requested and the justices have agreed that the privileged classes should be exempted;

but nothing final has yet been done, and whatever may be done will always be liable to alteration at the discretion of the justices. Government is placed in the extraordinary situation, not of being restrained from taxing, but from relieving its subjects from taxation. The justices, although they are themselves nominated by Government, can levy taxes without its consent; and, though it may be convinced that the levying of a tax may excite discontent, and even occasion disturbance, it can only obtain a remission of it by application to the justices. Government should never be obliged to solicit: such a proceeding must always weaken the respect by which it ought to be supported.

If the framers of the Act did actually intend to exclude Government from all authority over the assessment, they must have supposed that the justices had a common feeling with the people, and were more likely than Government to protect them from undue exactions. Nothing can be more erroneous than such an opinion. The justices can neither from their habits or situation have any such feeling. They have no common interest with the people; Government has, and to it therefore should be confided the direction of the assessment, or at all events the power of modifying or remitting it whenever it is apprehended that it may excite disaffection or outrage. It seems to be contrary to every sound principle of policy that a body of justices should be able, by an injudicious application of a tax, to produce disturbance in the country, and that Government should not have the means of preventing it.

Importance of the power of resuming grants in order to prevent diminution of the revenues of the State.

The inconvenience which has arisen from the suits relative to the jágír of Kalam-ullah-Khán naturally lead to the consideration of the means by which the extension of the evil to all other jágír and inám lands may most easily be obviated. These means appear to be—(1) to prohibit the Supreme Court from all interference regarding such lands; and (2) to rescind Regulation XXXI. 1802. Enough has already been said concerning the interference of the Court. The Regulation in question was too readily adopted when we had little experience, and the sooner it is repealed the better. All native states exercise in the most unlimited manner the right of granting and revoking ináms at pleasure, sometimes at once, sometimes gradually, by a small quit-rent at first, and then raising it to a quarter, next to a half, and so on to the full rate of assessment. In India

revenue always follows the population and the person wherever they go. This is the usage, and it cannot be relinquished without endangering the future resources of the country; because, as the Government waste lands, together with the jágír and inám lands, are equal to from one-fourth to one-half of the whole of the lands in cultivation, if they were permanently exempted from the payment of revenue, they would gradually, instead of lying half waste and poorly cultivated as at present, become completely cultivated, by drawing off the cultivators and stock from the lands now paying revenue, which would be proportionably diminished. If an effect of this kind has not already been experienced in provinces containing a large proportion of jágír and inám, it is because it is prevented by the usage of transferring the assessment from the deserted to the newly cultivated lands. Whenever it is found that the revenue of a district has been considerably diminished by the abandonment of assessed land and the occupation of waste land belonging to jágírdárs or inámdárs, an assessment, proportionate in some degree to the loss, is imposed on the jagír and inám. It is this which relieves the public revenue from loss by former profuse grants, and if this power were relinquished, we should have no means of saving it from very considerable defalcation. The smaller ináms, though they separately contain only a few acres each, are very extensive collectively. They have for the most part been granted without authority by heads of villages and revenue servants; and when they have escaped notice for a few years, and have afterwards been discovered, they have been allowed to continue from charitable and interested motives, and they have from various causes a constant tendency to increase. The investigation of ináms was therefore, among the native governments, like an inquiry into the state of the nation, and it is advisable that we should occasionally investigate and resume, in order to prevent the abuses and increase to which ináms are liable from neglect.

* The decision of the Supreme Court referred to in the foregoing Minute, having been brought before the Privy Council in appeal, that tribunal held that the resumption of the jágír, and its re-grant to Kalam-ullah Khán, were acts of sovereignty, exercised by the Government on behalf of the East India Company, which the Supreme Court had no jurisdiction to annul or to question, and accordingly reversed the decree of the Supreme Court, so far as it affected the interests of the Company, and declared that the grant to Assim Khán did not prevail against the Company, and that their rights to the jágír in question were limited only by the grant which they themselves had made to Kalam-ullah Khán.

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE REVENUE SURVEY.

10th May, 1822.

Replies of the Collectors regarding the progress of the revenue survey.

THE answers by the Collectors to the queries of the Board of Revenue, which accompanied the letter of that Board to Government, dated the 18th April, gave a summary view of the survey in the several districts under this Presidency.

It appears from this summary that only a few of the districts have been regularly surveyed; that in some nothing has been done; that in others, surveys of detached parts have been made; and that different standards of measurement have been adopted in different districts, and sometimes even in the same district.

Main objects of a revenue survey.

The main objects of a survey are to record the exact quantity and description of all the land in every village; to ascertain the tenures and rights of the occupants or owners, as well as the rights of Government; to fix limits, and, by removing doubts, to obviate disputes respecting them; to establish mutual confidence between the ryots and the Government, by showing each what belongs to it; to ascertain the grounds of the assessment, not for the purpose of increasing the amount, but rather for that of enabling Government to avoid over-taxation; and, in short, to make what is now vague and fluctuating, definite and permanent.

Such a survey requires special qualifications.

But such a survey as will answer these ends cannot be made by every Collector. It requires a practical knowledge of details, which is never acquired in districts permanently settled, and not often in those under long leases. It will therefore be advisable to proceed cautiously, to undertake the survey at present only in the few districts in which Collectors

may be found capable of conducting it, and to extend it to others hereafter, whenever it may appear practicable. To attempt to introduce it everywhere immediately, would only be a useless waste of money and labour.

Surveys now in progress.

A survey has been begun in Chingleput, and one is now making of the lands not included in former surveys of the northern and southern divisions of Arcot. A revision of the assessment is being made in North Arcot, and is likewise required in Salem. The completion of the operations in these districts will probably be nearly as much as can be undertaken at present, but if the Board of Revenue can conveniently extend the survey to any other districts, it may be done.

Expediency of using the acre as the general standard of land measurement.

The observations of that Board on the expediency of using the acre as the general standard in all accounts of measurement transmitted to the Presidency, are perfectly just. Without some general standard, no correct idea can be formed of the assessment of any district, nor can any comparison be made between that of different districts. The advantages of such a standard are so many, and the objections to it so few and trifling, that I am satisfied that we ought to adopt the acre as the scale of measure, not only in the English accounts, but in all the native village accounts. The measures employed in different districts, and even in different villages in the same district, often differ as much from each other as from the acre. As no one scale will answer for all districts, and still less for all villages, it makes no difference to the people, whether the one adopted be the acre or any other; they soon discover in what proportion it is greater or less than their own. In a very few weeks the inhabitants of the Ceded Districts became acquainted with the acre, and introduced it into their language. The bígháå,* in the same manner, is still in use over extensive provinces where it was originally unknown.

The assessment should have reference to the ordinary degree of cultivation in ordinary seasons.

The sentiments expressed by the Board of Revenue, regarding the impossibility of regulating the assessment by the varying fertility of the land, are what ought to be particularly attended to by the local officers. The rent which the assessment is intended to fix, is that of Government, not that of the ryot and his tenant. The Government rent should be that which is produced by the ordinary degree of cultivation in ordinary seasons—what the ryot may easily pay, without any

* *Bíghá*, a measure of land, somewhat less than an acre.

labour or expense beyond what is usually employed. Whatever increase of produce may be derived from extra labour or expense should be his own—the assessment ought not to rise with it.

The actual produce in a long series of years is the safest guide in fixing the assessment.

In fixing the assessment of the lands of any village, the safest guide is the actual produce and collections during a long course of former years. Even when these have been ascertained, it is sometimes necessary to make some allowance for the kind of ryot by whom particular lands may have been held, because in villages where each ryot holds for himself, unconnected with the rest, the principal ryots often contrive to hold their lands at a lower rate than the inferior ryots.

The want of a regular survey need not delay the introduction of a ryotwár settlement.

The want of a regular survey does not in any way hinder the introduction of a ryotwár settlement, when there are no other circumstances to prevent it, because the village accounts always exhibit the detail of the lands, their distribution among the ryots, their rent, and the extent of the several fields or shares, either founded on estimate, or on some ancient measurement; and from such accounts it has long been the custom in most parts of India to make the ryotwár settlement.

The circular letter proposed by the Board of Revenue seems to me to be calculated to answer the purposes for which it is intended.

ON CERTAIN POINTS IN THE REVENUE SYSTEM IN FORCE IN MALABAR.*

16th July, 1822.

Completeness of Mr. Græme's report on Malabar.

Mr. Græme's report on Malabar contains ample details on everything connected with the condition of the people and the

* Malabar is an extensive district on the western coast of India, extending from 10° 12′ to 12° 15′ north latitude, and between the parallels of 75° 10′ and 76° 50 east longitude. It is bounded on the north by Canara, on the east by Coorg and Mysore, on the south-east by the Nilgiris and Coimbatore, on the south by the native State of Cochin, and on the west by the sea. It covers an area of 6002 square miles, and, according to the last census, contains a population of 2,261,250 persons, of whom 72·2 per cent. are Hindus and 25·7 Mahomedans; only 1·9 per cent. are Christians; 31 persons were returned as Jains, and 54 as others. Malabar in former days was under the feudal system. It was held by a number of petty Hindu chiefs, who were quite independent of each other, and who, though generally yielding fealty to some paramount power, held their lands in absolute proprietary right. Some of these chiefs, gradually obtaining an ascendency over the others, became the ruling Rájás of the country, exacting feudal servitude from the other landholders. Their revenues consisted, besides the produce of their own private domains, of custom duties on trade, mint duties, escheats of intestate property, poll taxes and taxes on professions, a variety of royalties on cardamom and other indigenous products, the wrecks of all vessels stranded on the coast, presents on festival days, and occasional contributions on extraordinary exigencies. There was no land-tax. In 1766 Malabar was conquered by Hyder Ali, and remained under Mysore rule until 1792, when by the treaty of Seringapatam it was ceded by Tippoo to the East India Company. The Mysore rulers imposed a land-tax, but, owing to the long-established rights possessed by the landholders of private property in their land, were unable to exact more than a share of the landlord's rent. After Malabar became British territory, the revenue management was entrusted for a time to the native chiefs; but it was soon found necessary to take it into the hands of the Government, and the chiefs were granted permanent allowances equal to a fifth of the revenues. The principles of the land revenue system introduced by the Mahomedan Government, which was in essentials ryotwar, the settlement being made with each individual landholder, were retained. At the time when the foregoing Minute was written, the principal taxes imposed upon the land in Malabar were a tax on the land cultivated with rice, calculated not with reference to the extent of the land, but with reference to the quantity of seed required to sow it, which varies according to the quality of the soil; a tax on fruit-trees, such as cocoanut, areca, and jack; a tobacco monopoly, and an export duty on pepper. The tobacco monopoly and the export duty on pepper have since been abolished. The land-tax in Malabar is light, and

various branches of revenue. It contains a great mass of information which will always be useful for future reference. It shows the defects of the present system of assessment, the amendments he proposes, and the mode of carrying them into effect; and it is, on the whole, the fullest and most comprehensive report ever received of any province under this Government. The improvements suggested by him in this and in former reports are too various to be adopted at once. Whatever is to be done, must be done gradually, beginning with what is most necessary and important.

First steps to be taken for improving the internal administration of Malabar.

That which must precede all other improvement, and without which no regularity can be introduced into the internal administration of Malabar, is the division of the country into villages and districts, with the allotment of a proper establishment of village and district servants, under the direction of an efficient Huzzúr cutcherry. After the introduction of a well-regulated gradation of revenue servants, the first improvement to be undertaken by the Collector should be the revision of the assessment upon gardens, and the second should be the revision of the assessment on rice lands.

Special reasons for revising the land assessment of Malabar.

The main arguments against any alteration of the assessment are, that it would operate as a tax on improvement, and that it would destroy all confidence in the security of property. In some countries these effects would no doubt follow a revision of the assessment; but, considering the circumstances under which the assessment was originally made, and since occasionally modified in Malabar, I do not think that such effects would attend its revision in that province. It is supposed by the Board of Revenue, that the inequality of the existing assessment arises 'as much from the different degrees 'of labour bestowed on the land as from any original disparity 'of assessment, and therefore that any revision of it would be 'tantamount to a tax on improvement.' This opinion, however applicable to most of the provinces under this Government, is not so with regard to Malabar. The rice lands of that country

its aggregate increase, compared with the increase of population, has been inconsiderable. In 1808 it was a little over £160,000; in 1873 it was only £186,000, while the population had increased from 700,000 in 1808, to 2,261,250 in 1871. Between 1808 and 1865 the value of the exports by sea rose from £200,000 to £1,620,000. Malabar is now one of the most prosperous districts in India. Land is very valuable, and its possession is eagerly sought. Mortgages, however, of various descriptions are more common than outright sales, the landholders having a great aversion to relinquishing the Jenm, or fee-simple right.

have for ages past reached that degree of improvement beyond which they cannot be carried, and the landlords' rent has, in consequence, been ascertained and fixed from a remote period. As the produce cannot be increased by the cultivator, or the rent by the landlord, the whole of the inequality must arise from the original disparity of assessment, and no part of it from improvement. The original assessment was extremely unequal, and, what is a greater evil, it was in many places much too high. The inequality has not grown up gradually, but was created at once by taking in some cases ten and in others ninety per cent. of the landlord's rent. This rent furnished a groundwork for regulating the public assessment, which is very rarely to be found. Had we ascertained its amount, and fixed a certain share of it, one-half or three-fourths, as the Government due, and had there afterwards been complaints of inequality or inability to pay the assessment, we might have been certain that they arose from mismanagement, or from temporary causes which would easily be remedied. But when we take ninety or ninety-five, and sometimes even one hundred per cent. of the proprietor's rent, we annihilate one species of property, his rent as landlord. We reduce him to the necessity of living, like his tenants, on the agricultural profits of such lands as he may have in his own hands, and we leave him no way of retrieving himself, because his land has long since attained its highest point of fertility. In most of the other districts under Madras the reasoning of the Board of Revenue is perfectly just, because in them the Government assessment is regulated, not by the landlord's rent (because there is in general no such rent), but by the gross produce obtained by the cultivator from the soil; and as he can increase the produce by many various ways—by manure, by labour, and by irrigation—the rate of assessment to the produce must everywhere and every day become more and more unequal; and to attempt to equalize it would often operate as a tax upon industry, and prove extremely vexatious.

The revision of the assessment to the extent to which it is proposed to revise it, will not impair confidence in the security of landed property in Malabar.

I can see no reason for believing that the revision of the assessment would destroy confidence in the security of property. It could not have this effect unless we were to raise the assessment beyond the rates usually considered as the standard rates of the province. But as it is not intended to do this, there can be no cause for alarm, or for supposing that persons who may have purchased land under the Company's Government

will regard any increase of assessment upon it from the revision as a violation of the rights of property and of the faith of Government. These persons could have had no reason to infer from anything that they had seen or heard, that their own particular assessment was permanent. An assurance had been given that the assessment on rice land would not exceed sixty per cent. of the landlord's rent; but this was generally for the whole province, and they must have known, from the changes and proceedings which had taken place, that it was always intended to equalize the assessment upon the landlords' rent, and they must have regulated their purchases by the probability of such an event. They had seen a new assessment imposed by Hyder Ali; they had seen it changed by Tippoo Sultan, more than once by the Commissioners, by Major Macleod, by Mr. Rickards, and partially by Mr. Warden and the present Collector. They had seen surveys or estimates made by Major Macleod, Mr. Rickards, and Mr. Warden avowedly for the purpose of equalizing the assessment; and until such an equalization, founded upon one or other of these surveys, was made, they could have no ground for supposing the assessment to be permanent.

A revision of the land assessment in accordance with the general wish of the landholders.

The chief reasons in favour of the alteration of the assessment are its inequality, the impossibility in many cases of collecting it, the distraint of property and the sales of lands necessary for its realization, the unpopularity of this novel measure, and the general wish of the landholders themselves for a revision. It is stated by Mr. Græme that if what Mr. Warden says—'that though the existing assessment is light 'on many estates, it bears heavily on a few'—were true, he would not think revision necessary; but personal inspection, numerous complaints, the earnest request of the principal people of all the districts which he visited, that a revision should take place, and the difficulty of collecting the revenue, convinced him that many individuals suffered from the weight of the assessment. There cannot be a better reason for revision than very great inequality, more particularly when it has been caused by the unequal imposition of the tax at first, and not by the different degrees of labour bestowed on the land; and when we consider the loose system of accounts which has prevailed in Malabar—the adoption of the assessments of Hyder and Tippoo, by the Commissioners, as the standard for the

future revenue of the province, without knowing the principles on which they had been framed—the admission by Mr. Rickards of the general accuracy of the accounts of rent delivered by the proprietors, though extremely false—the great errors in the estimate by his successor of the resources and rent of the country, and the hurried manner in which the produce and assessment accounts of Hyder and Tippoo must have been prepared in times of constant disturbance,—when we consider all these things, we must perceive that little reliance can be placed upon any statements of the actual condition of the landowners drawn from the present cutcherry accounts, and that an obstinate adherence to an assessment, originally extremely unequal, must every year ruin many of the old landowners, but more particularly those of garden lands.

The revision of the assessment on the garden lands should be periodical, and should have reference to the productive capacity of the land. A revision not so requisite in the case of the rice lands.

The revision of the rice lands is not so urgently required as that of the garden, because the rent of the rice land is in general steady through a long period of years. A comparison of old and modern deeds shows that at the distance of centuries it is often the same. But there are no accounts of the old rent of garden or plantation, because it does not remain for any length of time recorded in deeds. This of itself is a sufficient proof, were there no other, that the rent of plantation has always been variable—rising, declining, or disappearing entirely with the produce; and the imposition, therefore, of a permanent assessment on what is so liable to fluctuation, and even annihilation, must frequently be impracticable and oppressive. The usage of the country has always been for the landlord and the tenant of the plantation to revise the rent periodically, and to fix it according to the state of the produce, and Government ought to do the same. No fairer or safer rule can be adopted. There is no danger that industry would be discouraged, or property in plantations rendered insecure, by fixing the Government assessment at a declared proportion of the rent, and revising the rent at intervals of not less than twelve years. The custom of revising plantation, and not revising rice land rent, among the inhabitants is no doubt founded upon experience having taught them that the distinction is both useful and necessary.

The sale of land for arrears of revenue is politically an evil.

It has been supposed by the Collectors that it is better not to make any revision; that the country is improving; that the occasional sales of land are rather an indication of individual

failures, than of any decline of the public resources; and that when offers are not made for lands exposed for sale on account of balances, they should be purchased on the public account. This is a measure to which Government ought never to resort in Malabar. It ought either to lower the assessment or to remit the balance. But could purchasers always be found, and could every arrear be realized in this way, I should neither think it any sign of the prosperity of the country, nor any argument for supporting our revenue by an innovation so unpopular as the sale of land. It appears that, though it has been only recently introduced, and was at first very trifling, it is increasing rapidly. From Faslí 1220 to 1227, in order to satisfy public balances, 1225 rice fields and gardens, besides personal property, were sold; and in 1228, in one single taluk, 1330 plantations and rice fields were sold. The sales of lands for arrears, besides occasioning the ruin of the proprietors, are productive of evil consequences. The best parts are sold first, the worst last; and as the tax is not equally apportioned according to the produce—that which was before too high on the whole land is now still higher on particular parts—unequal assessment is continued and increased, and, what may be regarded as a serious evil, much of the land sold is transferred from the possession of Nairs to that of Moplahs, the worst race in Malabar and the most hostile to our dominion. By selling the land we often destroy the landlord. It is no proof of his not being overassessed, that another buys it; a purchaser may be found as long as there is a rupee of rent. If the landowner who formerly had a clear rent of a hundred rupees, has now, from overassessment or some other cause, only five or ten rupees, he can no longer maintain his family, and must sell his land. The overassessment is no loss to the purchaser; he only pays for what is left. The rent is still paid, but a valuable link in society, the landlord, is gone.

The preservation and independence of the great body of the landlords much to be desired.

If we look merely to revenue, it is not essential to its realization that we should have a body of landlords; for were there not a single landlord in Malabar, the present and even a much greater revenue might be drawn from the profits of the cultivators. But the preservation and the independence ot the great body of landlords, though not necessary for the purpose of securing our revenue, is essential to the attainment of the higher objects of good Government and the future im-

provement of the people. Mr. Græme has taken a liberal and judicious view of this subject. He says 'that by leaving a rent 'to landlords, a class will then be formed of men, whose ideas, 'not being exclusively confined to the tillage of the ground or 'to servile occupation, are possessed of education to qualify 'them to be intelligent arbitrators in disputes, and able revenue 'and police officers of Government. It is by the means of 'such men alone that any general improvement in knowledge, 'in morals, and religion can be brought about.' In order, however, to preserve so useful a class of men as the landlords, it is necessary to leave them a rent, and to revise our assessment for this purpose, and lower it where too high.

Mr. Græme has shown that the estimates of the produce and the landlords' rent of Malabar by former Collectors were erroneous. In an abstract transmitted by the Collector to the Board of Revenue, he made the landlords' rent amount to parrahs 124,29,363, and the Government revenue on this rent at six-tenths of the amount, Rs. 10,65,372. By taking in some districts one measure in place of another, and in others a smaller in place of a larger measure of the same denomination, the Collector overrated the Government revenue more than fifty per cent. This excess, however, is partly corrected by another error in taking too low a price. The price he assumes is Rs. 14-1-1½ in place of Rs. 19-9-4¼, which Mr. Græme states to be the proper one, and which, if applied, would raise the value of the landlord's rent, but leave it still thirty-four per cent. below the Collector's abstract. Mr. Græme shows also that the same abstract contains very considerable errors in the estimate of plantation rent, and that it cannot be received as an authority for judging of the real amount of either the rent of rice or plantation land. Mr. Græme's remarks on this point.

Mr. Græme then states the principles on which he calculates the amount of the landlords' rent, and the share of it which ought to form the Government revenue. He estimates, from information from many different sources, that the share of the rent which remains to the landlord after paying the Government revenue, varies in different districts from twenty to thirty and thirty-five per cent. He finds by calculating these rates at the selling prices, and adding the amount of the several districts together, the total rent is Rs. 14,30,700-3-3¾, of which the Government share at six-tenths is Rs. 8,60,220-2-3, which is Mr. Græme's calculations and proposals.

below the present revenue—Rs. 2,11,607-2-5½—but he recommends, as being nearer to the estimated rent of Mr. Rickards, that the Government share should be six-tenths and a half instead of six-tenths, which will make the Government revenue Rs. 9,31,905-2-19, or thirteen per cent. less than the present revenue, Rs. 1,39,922-1-89½.

Remarks on them.

It may be thought that the six-tenths and a half now proposed is a higher assessment than the six-tenths proclaimed to the inhabitants in 1805 under the sanction of Government, but it is actually less; because the rent assumed by Mr. Rickards was not the real rent, but one formed by 'deducting the seed, and 'an equal quantity for expenses of cultivation, and one-third of 'the remainder for the cultivator, from the gross produce.' As the allowance made here for cultivation is too low, the estimate is consequently higher than the actual rent, and the taking six-tenths and a half, in place of six-tenths, as the Government share, will merely make the amount of that share correspond with what it would have been according to Mr. Rickards' calculation.

After establishing these rates, he allows the owners of plantations to cut down whatever old trees cannot pay, and to receive a proportionate remission. He thinks the rates so light, that almost every tree, however old, will be able to pay them; but he estimates that if even twenty per cent. of the old trees are cut down, the revenue of Government from the whole province will be reduced only about Rs. 31,000 below its present amount.

It is undoubtedly a defective principle of taxation which induces a man to cut down a tree. Though it did not produce the full tax, it produced something, or it would not have been left standing, and that something is now lost. Some method might perhaps be found in practice of making such a remission for old trees as would save them from being prematurely cut down, without exposing the revenue to any material loss. As we must, at all events, count the trees, it would not be much additional labour to ascertain what number of old trees the owner proposed to cut down, to examine whether only a part or the whole could not bear the tax, and to make a proportionate remission, leaving them standing. If this cannot be done without being liable to too much abuse, we must be content to sacrifice a part of the old trees. The injury will

not be great, and will soon be counterbalanced by increase of produce, because the relief which the owner will derive from the remission on his old trees, will enable him the more easily to replace them with a greater number of young trees.

The result with regard to the revenue of the proposed revisions would be as follows:— *Result to the revenue.*

	Present revenue.			Future revenue.			Decrease.		
Low rice land	10,71,828	0	8½	9,31,905	2	19	1,39,922	1	89½
Upland rice and oil, &c.	21,887	1	62½	21,887	1	62½			
Plantation	4,26,201	3	48¾	3,94,503	2	24	31,698	1	24¾
	15,19,917	1	19¾	13,48,296	2	5½	1,71,620	3	14¼
But if we restore the pepper-tax	...			...		..	1,20,000	0	0
The decrease of revenue would not exceed				...		... Rs.	51,620	3	14¼

Mr. Græme has taken great pains in framing a rule for the revision of plantation revenue. The best principle would be that of a certain share of the rent, if the rent could be easily ascertained. But unfortunately this cannot be done, because the rent of plantation is constantly fluctuating; and Mr. Græme is therefore obliged to adopt another, which he explains at full length, and which appears to be as free from objection as any that can be found. His plan is in substance as follows:—He takes the whole number of trees according to the accounts delivered by the owners themselves in 1805-6; he makes additions of young and deductions of old trees for the interval of time; he deducts all young trees not yet bearing; he takes the produce of all the remaining trees according to the owners' accounts of 1805; he calculates the value of the produce by what he has ascertained to be the average price of each district; he estimates the Government share generally according to the custom of the country at one-third of the gross produce, but in some districts a little higher, where it is so by usage. From these calculations he finds the average Government assessment. *Method of revision proposed by Mr. Græme in the case of plantation revenue.*

Mr. Græme thinks an export custom revenue so much preferable to a land revenue on pepper, that he recommends trial of it on an increased rate, so as to make up from the export duty a sum of Rs. 1,20,000 for land revenue abolished. He states, however, that it is liable to strong objection from the inducement it would offer to smuggling. But there is a difficulty which he does not notice—the Act of Parliament *Objections to an export duty on pepper.*

which prevents the imposition of new duties. The export duty required to make up the sum proposed would be twenty-seven per cent. If the land-tax were revised, it should, in Mr. Græme's opinion, be fixed at one-fourth of the gross produce, and would at this rate yield Rs. 1,20,000. He thinks that the quantity might be fixed at 6000 candies, and the price at eighty rupees per candy, both of which are lower than the average of late years. From 1812 to 1817 the average export by sea and land has been candies 6712-13-2$\frac{2}{16}$, which at the tariff rates of Rs. 94-1-22$\frac{13}{16}$[1] gives Rs. 6,33,051-1-18, on which the land revenue is only 20$\frac{14}{16}$ per cent. Mr. Græme proposes that one-fourth of the gross produce shall be the share of the Government, and that whenever this one-fourth at the tariff rate of the day shall exceed Rs. 1,20,000, the excess shall be remitted to the owners of the plantations.

Points immediately demanding consideration are the establishment of a proper gradation of revenue servants, the division of the country into districts and villages, and the revision of the plantation or garden assessment.

Should it be found advisable hereafter to revert to a land-tax on pepper, I am persuaded that it will not meet with any opposition from the landowners, and that it will be established with as little difficulty as the tax on any other kind of plantation. But the consideration of the pepper-tax, the tobacco and timber monopolies, and even of the revision of the rice land-tax, may be deferred for the present. The points which demand immediate attention are those already noticed in the second paragraph, namely, the establishment of a proper gradation of revenue servants, the division of the country into districts, or tahsildaries, and villages, and the revision of the rent of plantation. These arrangements cannot be carried into effect unless by a person well acquainted with the revenue and with the people of Malabar. The present Collector has had long experience, and might, had no change been contemplated, have answered very well to conduct the existing system. But from his having been long habituated to loose and defective accounts, from his want of confidence in the people, from his disinclination to the intended change, and from other circumstances, I am satisfied that he could not, with any hope of success, be chosen as the instrument for the introduction of the new system. The person best qualified for this purpose is Mr. Græme, by whom it has been proposed and supported by so many facts drawn from an accurate knowledge of the state of the country. By selecting him we shall lose for a time the benefit of his services in the Sudder

Adálat. But this ought to give way to the higher consideration of the interests of a whole province, which are essentially concerned in the establishment of a system of internal order, which shall render it more easy than at present to learn the actual condition of the people, and to remove every cause of real grievance. I have therefore no difficulty in recommending that Mr. Græme be sent back as Commissioner to Malabar, to carry into effect the system proposed; and that, in order the better to facilitate his progress, he be authorized to assume the immediate revenue management of any one or more districts, whenever he may deem it advisable.

TIMBER MONOPOLY IN MALABAR AND CANARA.

26th November, 1822.

Origin of the timber monopoly.

THE forest monopoly has arisen partly from public, partly from private views. As far back as 1799, only a few months after we had got possession of Canara, the Collector was requested to recommend the appointment of a Conservator of the Forests; but he refused, because he was convinced that it would prove injurious to the country.

In 1805 the Madras Government assented to the appointment of an agent from Bombay, to ascertain to what extent the forests could be made available for ship-building. This was no sooner done, than Captain Johnson asked assistance to get timber not claimed by individuals as private property. The Government promised reasonable assistance; but there can be no reasonable assistance where Government interferes, and this slight beginning with reasonable assistance has now grown up into a wide and oppressive monopoly.

Forests of Malabar and Canara placed under the superintendence of the Bombay Government.

The Supreme Government, in 1806, forwarded an order of the Honourable the Court of Directors, dated the 3rd of July, 1805, to the Madras Government to transfer to that of Bombay full authority over the forests and timber trade of Malabar, in order to insure a supply of wood to the navy, as well as for their own shipping, 'provided the Supreme Government saw no 'weighty objection.' None appears to have been seen, as the transfer was made immediately. The Madras Government went even beyond the orders of the Honourable Court, which applied only to Malabar; for in December, 1806, at the request of Bombay, it made over to that Government the forests of Canara also, because they were said to have crooked timber, which Malabar wanted. The Conservator of the Forests, at this early period,

wanted a regulation to arm him with powers in the country. The Madras Government answered that 'it was not intended 'to give him powers which might infringe on the positive right 'of the inhabitants,' and refused to enact a regulation; but being constantly urged, gradually gave way, and in April, 1807, a proclamation was issued in Malabar, which begins with declaring that 'The Honourable the Court of Directors having 'resolved to assume the sovereignty of the forests,' &c. This proclamation excited a discontent which has never subsided. It places the forests of Malabar and Canara under the superintendence and control of the Bombay Government, announces Captain Watson as Conservator, and prohibits the cutting or destroying trees in the teak forests. Orders were transmitted with this proclamation to the local officers, to assist the Conservator in preserving the forests. Orders were likewise soon after issued, at the request of the Bombay Government, exempting the timber trade generally on the Malabar coast from the payment of duties. The Judge at Tellicherry having requested instructions as to whether the Conservator was at liberty to prevent the transit and export of private timber without a permit from him, the Madras Government answered that they saw no objection, provided it was only with the view of ascertaining the quantity of timber exported; but that the Court was to see that it did not interfere with the right of individuals to export their own private timber.

Complaints of the working of the system; its tendency to invade the rights of the people.

Complaints had been constantly coming even before this time against the system, and Mr. Thackeray, who was then in Malabar, recommended that the private rights in the forests should be bought up by Government. This plan was adopted by Captain Watson, but seems to have been executed only in part, and to have been relinquished, on his departure, by his successors. Complaints still continued, and the Madras Government, in transmitting to Bombay a petition from certain timber merchants against the proceedings of the Conservator and the monopoly of the forests by Government, suggested the propriety of the Conservator's confining his operations to the forests, undoubtedly public property. But this was the very difficulty, for it had never been ascertained what was public and what private, and the Conservator's establishment had, therefore, little difficulty in extending their claims over the private forests. After the petition in question had been

referred to Bombay, and received from thence with the Conservator's reply, the Judge of Tellicherry was directed by Government to inform the petitioners that their claims could not be admitted, and that they might prosecute them in the manner prescribed by the regulations. But it is evident that, whatever have been the merits of these petitioners' claims, the actual proprietors were exposed to great hardship; for they are first placed under a system whose inevitable tendency is to invade their rights, and then left to seek redress in the Courts. The consequences were what might have been foreseen; the evil increased every day. The Conservator gradually asserted a claim to teak grown on private estates, which not being sufficiently resisted, the monopoly, by the end of 1809, was pretty well established over Malabar and Canara.

Proposal to prevent the export of timber from Cochin and Travancore to the Gulfs of Persia and Arabia.

In 1809 the Bombay Government proposed, on the ground of weakening the pirates, to prevent the export of timber for ship-building from Cochin and Travancore to the Gulfs of Persia and Arabia; but the Supreme Government, on the case being referred to them from Madras, refused to interfere. In 1811 an application to the same effect was made by the Bombay to the Supreme Government, who authorized the Madras Government to endeavour to carry the measure into effect if it appeared advisable.

Proposal to exclude the Mangalore merchants from purchasing timber in Coorg.

In September, 1811, the Bombay Government stated that the Mangalore merchants, being shut out from getting timber in Canara, resorted to Coorg, and requested that the Rajah might be required to hold all the teak and poon in his country at the disposal of the Company. The Supreme Government refused their assent to this proposition. Had they decided otherwise, the merchants of Mangalore would surely have had much ground for complaining of the rigour of our administration. They had been shut out by us from getting timber in their own country, and when they go for it into a foreign one, they are also followed by our restrictions.

The Conservator of Forests having made a contract for one year for supplying the Mahratta districts with timber from Súnda above the Gháts, the Board of Revenue objected strongly to this measure, and showed that it was a complete deviation from the intention of the Conservator system, as it raised a land revenue from the forests of Súnda by the sale of wood for inland consumption.

In 1812 the Bombay Government, in forwarding to Madras an application from a native merchant to build a ship at Cochin, suggested the propriety of removing the restrictions on the timber trade of Malabar; and this measure, on being recommended by the Madras to the Supreme Government, was authorized. But as it was interpreted merely to remove the prohibition on the export of timber to the Gulfs of Persia, Arabia, and Cutch, the monopoly still remained with little diminution as before. The Madras Government, in answer to a question from Bombay on this subject, explained that their late orders on this head were meant to put the timber trade on its former footing, and not to open the Company's forests to private merchants. But the original and main grievance was not removed by this declaration. The line between public and private forests had not been ascertained. All that the merchants wanted was that they should be allowed to dispose of private timber not required for the King's or Company's ships; but what they called private, the Conservator called public timber.

Attempt to introduce the monopoly into Travancore and Cochin.

In 1814 the Conservator attempted to stop Cochin teak on its passage to the sea. Though the Bombay Government had agreed, on the representation of the Resident, that timber belonging to Cochin should be allowed to pass through the Company's territories on paying the regular duties, and though this resolution had been communicated to the Resident, they afterwards, on the recommendation of their Marine Board, objected to the arrangement; but it was allowed to continue, on the suggestion of the Madras Government that it was too late to withhold what had already been granted. The Bombay Government communicated at the same time that they had it in contemplation to treat with the Rajah of Cochin for all his timber. This was followed by another application for assistance in obtaining all the timber cut in Cochin and Travancore for the purposes of ship-building. The Resident, in answer to a reference made to him on this subject, stated that the Rájás of Travancore and Cochin would be happy to enter into engagements to sell all their wood to the Company, provided they got a fair price. He exposed the impolicy of acting on any other principle, and by his just and enlarged views he saved the people of Travancore and Cochin from the evils of the forest monopoly. But though these two provinces have been kept out of the hands of the Conservator, we have still,

down to the present year, frequent complaints by his department and the inhabitants of mutual encroachments.

Proposed legislation with reference to the conservancy of forests in Malabar.

In our provinces of Malabar and Canara, the severity of the forest system increased every day; and no wonder, for it was so undefined that the judges who punished the ryots for trespasses, were in doubt whether the Conservator was amenable to the Courts. In such a state of things it was quite natural that the system should, from one of mere preservation, become one of oppressive monopoly. It was complained of by all the local authorities, by the judges, the magistrates, and the Collectors. The Judge of South Malabar observes that, by the Bombay instructions of 1806, 'it was considered that the timber 'on the inhabited parts of the country is the property of the 'landlords, and the jungles forming the eastern boundary the 'undoubted right of the Honourable Company;' and that 'it 'may be equally unknown to the Bombay Government and to 'that of Fort St. George that teak timber, the growth of 'private estates paying revenue to Government, is cut down 'and appropriated to the use of the Honourable Company, and 'that jungle timber, the growth of the cultivated parts of the 'country, is equally liable to the duty levied by the Con'servator with that felled in the forest.' These remarks were contained in a letter submitting his opinion on the draft of a proposed Regulation for the Conservator. The Madras Government had, in 1814, suggested to that of Bombay the propriety of a Regulation to define and limit the powers of the Conservator. In the following year the draft of a Regulation was received from Bombay which had been proposed by the Marine Board; but as it was calculated rather to strengthen than to limit the authority of the Conservator, it was objected to by the local authorities, for whose opinion it was circulated. Mr. Warden, the Collector of Malabar, stated the hardship of the inhabitants not being permitted to cut wood for ordinary purposes without paying duty, or even firewood without a permit, proposed to draw the line between public and private forest, and submitted an amended draft. This amended draft was approved by the Honourable Court of Directors, and ordered to be engrafted upon the body of the proposed Regulation. It was sent to Bombay, but was not returned until the present year.

The Regulation in its present shape, though much im-

proved, is still highly objectionable. Section II. provides for the appointment of the Conservator by the Bombay Government. If we are to have Conservators at all, they should be from Madras. It is contrary to all just principles of Government that the servants of one Government should be vested with such powers in the territories of another, as are given to the Conservator. The appointment of the Conservator should be vested in the Government to which the forests belong, as being the arrangement most likely to insure cordiality and efficiency. By Section III. the collection of the interior duties on timber and the general superintendence of the export timber trade are transferred to Bombay. These powers are very objectionable in the hands of the servants of another Government, who can have no interest in the protection of the inhabitants of this. We are foreigners in this country even under our own Government, and can seldom take all the interest we ought to do in the welfare of the natives. But when we bring the servants of another Presidency to exercise authority over them, we augment the evil of this indifference. By Sections VII. and VIII., cutting and wasting are to be punished, and the Magistrates are to order their servants to assist those of the Conservator in apprehending offenders. This is erecting a double jurisdiction, with all the confusion and clashing of authorities which the transfer of the police to the Collector was intended to obviate. By Section XII. the public forests are defined to be the ghâts and the hilly tracts. But this definition is not accurate, and would not prevent abuse, as private lands and forests are often situated among the ghâts and the hilly tracts along their bases. But it is needless to examine the provisions of a Regulation which ought never to be enacted. To pass a Regulation at all would only serve to confirm the system which we wish to abolish.

The appointment of the Conservator by the Government of Bombay objectionable.

The servants of one Presidency should not be invested with powers in another.

The enactment of a Regulation inexpedient, as tending to confirm a system which ought to be abolished.

In order to protect the property of the public and of individuals in the forests, their limits must first be ascertained, and this can only be done by a survey. But there can be no investigation of rights while the monopoly continues. The Conservator and the monopoly must first be withdrawn, and then public and private rights may be freely and fairly ascertained. It is inseparable from the very nature of such an establishment, having interests and objects at variance with the prosperity of the people, that it should perpetually encroach;

The Conservator and the monopoly should be withdrawn.

and while it is allowed to stand, it will create so many impediments as to render a survey quite impracticable. By abolishing the monopoly, private rights will at once be secured by each man looking, as formerly, after his own. Public rights may suffer some little invasion from smugglers, but the Collector can easily, by the means in his hands, prevent the mischief from becoming of any importance, and he and the inhabitants will easily adjust their respective rights when they are freed from the intervening authority of the Conservator.

Hardships inflicted on the inhabitants of Malabar by the conservancy system.

Under the Native Princes and under our own Government, before the appointment of the Conservator, the trade and timber was perfectly free, subject to a duty on exportation. Every ryot planted or cut down at pleasure on his own property. Part of his property consisted of hills, some near, others remote, from his habitation. On these hills he occasionally cleared away spots in succession for cultivation, by selling or burning the trees without any interference whatever, because they were his property as much as his rice fields, and were included in the deeds of sale of his estate. They constituted a material part of the property by which he was enabled to pay his revenue, because they furnished all the materials for his buildings and implements of husbandry, and also the manure of his lands; for as there are no sheep and few cattle on the Malabar coast, the manure is principally composed of shrubs, leaves, and branches of trees. The ryot had complete control over his wood of every kind, whether on the hills or in the villages, because it could not be taken from him without a violation of private property and administration both of his income and of the revenue. But what is his situation now? He cannot cut down or sell a bit of wood on his own property for the most ordinary purposes. He cannot even remove the young teak plants, which spring up from seeds scattered by the wind, though they are injuring. Though he cannot himself cut down his own trees, the Conservator cuts them down at pleasure, both on his hills and in his fields and gardens, and makes him pay duty on the wood; and he not only levies duties, but he confiscates property. A monopoly, or even any restriction on the cutting of wood, is in Malabar vexatious and oppressive in the highest degree. Wood is wanted in large quantities for every purpose, for boats, houses, barns, and granaries. In a country where the fall of rain during the five

monsoon months is from a hundred to one hundred and sixty inches, and sometimes nearly fifty inches in one month, it is almost impossible to make any building waterproof. The houses of all the more substantial ryots have a double roof or two stories. In the lower the family resides; the upper serves as a lumber-room, but its chief use is to defend the lower and carry off the water. The barns and granaries are necessarily constructed in a still more substantial manner, because a great part of the grain is reaped in the rainy season during short intervals of sunshine, and, in order to be dried, is instantly carried into the barns, which are made large for that purpose. The principal public buildings were formerly covered with copper, as the only means of completely excluding the water. The copper was stripped off and coined into money by Tippoo Sultan. But we go beyond him. He only deprived them of the copper, but we of the wood of their roof, or, what is the same thing, we prevent them, by our restrictions, from replacing it. These harsh measures have had their natural result—clamour and confirmed aversion and discontent, if not open resistance.

Free trade in timber more conducive to its growth than any conservancy system.

Why should we persevere in such conduct, when we have not even the pretence of any great national object to vindicate it. The world is at peace, and even if we were pressed by war, nothing could defend a continuance of such injustice towards the people of Malabar and Canara. The aid of the British navy was the original ground of the monopoly; the weakening of the pirates was a subsequent one. The danger of the pirates has long since passed, and the restriction on the timber trade to the Gulfs of Arabia and Persia has been abandoned. But the navy, it may be said, still requires the forests of Malabar to build one or two ships annually. If this is the case, the timber should be purchased in the market without any restrictive system; or if economy be the sole object, if we can believe that it can be of greater importance to the navy to get the timber of its Indian ships a little cheaper than usual, it may be got as cheap without a Conservator as with one, nay, much cheaper, if we reckon the expense of his establishment and the loss which private property and the public revenue sustained from the hindrance of trade and agriculture by the forest laws. Even if the timber under a free trade were a little more expensive, what great matter? Better that

it should not only be a little more, but that not a single ship should be built, than at the expense of such misgovernment. There is no danger, however, of a want of timber. The course we are now pursuing is the most likely to cause the want. A system to which a whole country is hostile can never succeed; the inhabitants will neglect or destroy the trees they cannot gain by. The navy is not indebted to the Conservator for a bit of wood. All that has been used sprung up without him under the old system, and will, if permitted, continue to grow and furnish a constant supply. The people of Malabar and Canara are chiefly agriculturists and merchants. A considerable proportion of the ryots are traders, and their country, being intersected by rivers and creeks, enables them to bring the produce to the coast in their own boats for sale, and they are too good traders not to cultivate teak, or whatever wood is likely to yield a profit. They are fond of planting. They plant trees for sale, for their private use, and in order to devote to their temples, and to encourage them no Regulation is wanted but a free market. Restore the liberty of trade in private wood. Let the public be guarded by its ancient protector; not a stranger, but the Collector and Magistrate of the country, and we shall get all the wood the country can yield, more certainly than by any restrictive measures. Private timber will be increased by good prices, and trade and agriculture will be freed from vexation. If timber cannot be preserved by these measures, it will not by any other. Independent of what is due to justice, sound policy should lead us to be cautious in tampering with the feelings of a people often turbulent, and who now submit reluctantly to our monopoly, and we should recollect that no paltry profit in timber can compensate for the loss of their goodwill. It is a mockery to talk of the protection of property under our Government, when we maintain a Conservator's establishment, whose chief business it is to invade every man's property, to harass him in his own fields, in his barn, in his house, and in his temple.

The conservancy system likely to alienate the goodwill of the people.

Calculated to discourage agriculture.

The system is one which is founded on the direct violation of private property, and sets every man, the landholder, the mechanic, and the merchant, against the Government. It may be thought that these evils might be obviated by confining the Conservator to the public forests, but this would prove a very inadequate remedy. Endless interruption would still be given

to the sale and transit of private wood, on pretence of its being public. Even if it were possible to believe that private timber could be perfectly secured from all interference, the complete preservation of the public forests would, of itself, be a serious injury to the country. If no part of a hill where teak or poon is now growing, is to be cultivated, it would stop the progress of cultivation over all hills belonging to Government. In many places, what is now forest and covered with teak and other trees, was formerly a cultivated country, and will again be cleared and have villages, if not prevented by the Conservator. The system we are following and now seeking to legalize by a Regulation, is worthy only of the times of the Norman Forest Laws. It is a system for preserving and augmenting the waste, or, in other words, for discouraging agriculture and laying waste the country. The only remedy for such evils is its entire abolition.

Course to be taken pending a reference to the Court of Directors.

The appointment of the Conservator was sanctioned by the Honourable Court of Directors only on the condition that there should be no material objection to it. The many strong objections which have since appeared were probably not then foreseen; but I am persuaded that whenever they are brought to the notice of the Honourable Court, they will concur in the necessity of putting an end to the system which has produced them. The attainment of this desirable object may perhaps be hastened by an immediate application to the Supreme Government on the subject, because, as that Government was authorized by the Honourable Court to exercise its discretion in permitting the appointment of a Conservator, it may deem it expedient to exercise a similar discretion in ordering the abolition of his office. I have already said that no Regulation is necessary; but it will be proper, pending our reference to Bengal and England, to direct the Collector to levy the duties on the timber at the usual rates, and to assist the Conservator in protecting the Company's forests, and to order him to publish the exemption of private wood from the Conservator's control, and to protect the inhabitants from the interference of his department with what is private property.

ON THE RELATIONS OF THE SUB-COLLECTORS TO THE COLLECTORS OF DISTRICTS.

13th December, 1822.

Subordination of the Sub-Collector and Magistrate to the Principal Collector and Magistrate.

IT appears from the case now under consideration, as well as from what took place in Tanjore, that the Sub-Collectors do not sufficiently understand their relative situation to the Principal Collector. A Sub-Collector and Magistrate is in every respect as completely under the authority of the Principal Collector as any assistant is. It is his duty to obey, not to discuss the orders of his superior. It is not likely that he will ever receive from him any order which it would be improper to execute. But even should anything so extraordinary occur, it is then his duty to state his sentiments respectfully to him, and should he persist in his former opinion, there ought to be no reply, but an appeal, if necessary, should at once be made to superior authority. The Sub-Collector can never be permitted to enter into controversy with his Principal, or to seek to put him in the wrong. Every such attempt will always be marked by the displeasure of Government. The Principal Collector must be left to his own discretion, guided by circumstances as to the extent of authority to be entrusted to the Sub-Collector; but as the main object of the appointment of a Sub-Collector is to enable him to qualify himself for the office of Collector, it is evident that he ought to be allowed to make his settlements, and to discharge and entertain his servants, and generally to perform every duty confided to him, with as little interference as may be compatible with the security of the revenue and the protection of public servants, as well as of the great body of the people.

TOUR IN THE NORTHERN SIRKÁRS AND NELLORE.

7th January, 1823.

MY late journey through the Northern Sirkárs and Nellore occupied a period of three months, and as I marched every day, except when obliged to halt by the rising of rivers, or the necessity of giving rest to the cattle, no time was left for any minute investigations. The Sirkárs are among our oldest possessions, and so much had been written upon them that I did not expect to learn anything regarding them that was not already known. My object, therefore, was not the examination of details, but rather from personal communication with the local authorities and the zemindárs and principal inhabitants to ascertain the general condition of the people, the political state of the country, the main causes which led to the frequent disturbance of its tranquillity, and the means most likely to remedy the disorder. I was satisfied that my journey would at least show the people of the Sirkárs that Government took an interest in their welfare, and that, if it produced no other result, it would not have been altogether without advantage. Objects of the tour.

The zemindárs have long had, and still have, such extensive power and influence as to claim the first place in every inquiry concerning the state of the country. I shall therefore notice most of those who met me on my tour, and the conversation I had with some of them, when it tends to throw any light on their character or their mode of managing their districts. The only principal zemindárs whom I did not see were those of Jeypore and Goomsúr. The Jeypore man was confined at home by age and sickness, and as the Goomsúr man's zemindári lies in the northern extremity of the Ganjam district, and as I went no further north than Ichchá- The zemindárs of the Northern Sirkárs.

pur, he could not have reached my tents unless I had halted four or five days longer at that place, which I could not venture to do, on account of the lateness of the season and the badness of the weather. I was very sorry that I did not see him, because I should probably have been better able to judge from his verbal communications than from his letters how far his reasons for wishing to exclude his son were just or otherwise.

Ancient zemindaries in Ganjam.

I landed in the Ganjam district, near Calingapatam, on the 24th July. There are twenty-one ancient zemindaries in this district, which pay altogether an annual permanent assessment of Rs. 4,35,899-8. But some of them are very inconsiderable, and their chiefs with respect to extent of territory and amount of revenue would be little better than heads of villages, were it not that they derived a superior influence in the country from their antiquity and their family alliances with the greater zemindárs. The Khimidi Rájá being considered as the first in rank among the Ganjam chiefs, and his country being that which has most frequently been the scene of disturbance, I proceeded immediately towards Khimidi. On the day after my arrival I was visited by the Rájá. He was timid, and spoke but little, owing to his having been always kept among the women. He is just come of age, and it is yet uncertain how he may turn out. The present manager is a native of the district, and well enough qualified, if supported. The Rájá expressed his satisfaction with him. But I suspect that in order to gratify his mother and get rid of her importunity, he is secretly desirous that his maternal uncle, Padmanábha Deo, should be the díwán. I received, after leaving Khimidi, several letters on this subject said to be from the bissois * and principal reddies and the Rájá's mother. But I suspected from the nature and style of them that they were written at the suggestion of Padmanábha himself, or some persons about the Rájá's mother. On questioning Padmanábha some time after, when I saw him in his own district, regarding them, he denied all knowledge of them, and said they were probably written by some persons about the women, who of themselves would not have written anything so disrespectful and absurd. He observed, however, that his nephew

The Khimidi Rájá.

* *Bissoi*, a petty chief of peons, or constables, who held land on a favourable tenure, under conditions of rendering police service. (See page 210.)

wished to have him as díwán; that he would not go to Khimidi if Government had any objection; but that the Rájá had no other person who could establish his authority by putting down all the different intrigues. Both the Collector and the Sub-Collector, Mr. Bayard, thought that his only motive for seeking the office was to get possession of the treasure which had been saved during the Rájá's minority. But he disclaimed this, and offered either to give security for it or to let it be deposited with the Collector. Though he failed on a former occasion when he held the office of díwán, and was forced by a combination of the principal inhabitants to resign, I still believe that he is the fittest person for it; but I left the Collector to act as he thought best.

Frequency of revolutions in Khimidi.

There have been so many revolutions in Khimidi, that there are many claimants to the succession, sprung from Rájás formerly expelled, and there are parties within the district, at the head of one of which is the eldest widow of the late Rájá, who now resides at Chicacole,* far beyond its limits. But the young Rájá still thinks her too near, and the only request he made before my departure was that she might be ordered to a more distant residence, to prevent her exciting troubles in the district. The letters to me, both from the Rájá's mother and from the bissois, which have been already alluded to, were in the highest degree disrespectful and threatening.

Zemindár of Mohiri.

On the route from Khimidi to Ichchápur, I saw the Jalantra and several other zemindárs, and on reaching Ichchápur I was visited by the minor zemindár of Mohiri, who appeared to be an intelligent boy. But though the people were well pleased with his appointment and the country was quiet, Mahartah had not left the hills to return to his former residence. I desired the Collector to endeavour to induce him to return, without showing too much solicitude about it, or giving him any cause for alarm. I believe that he is still apprehensive that he may be seized for his past conduct when off his guard. Such a suspicion is injurious to the character of our administration, and ought to be removed. He would probably never have disturbed the country had it not been sold to a shroff.† I concur with Mr. Thackeray in thinking that

* Properly, *Críkákulam.*

† *Shroff*—properly *sarráf*—a money-changer, banker money-lender.

the troubles in Mohiri arose entirely from the disgrace which the Deos of the neighbouring districts supposed they incurred by a shroff becoming the master of an ancient zemindári.

Pretender to the zemindári.

The day before my arrival at Ichchápur, I received a petition in the name of Vikrama Naraindar Deo, saying that he was the legal heir to Mohiri; that he is the son of Muja Deo by his third wife, and was adopted by the elder widow of the former Rájá, Harihar Naraindar Deo, who was murdered by his brothers, Muja Deo and Guna Deo, who were both in consequence imprisoned; that Guna Deo died in confinement, but Muja Deo, after eighteen years, was released; that Muja Deo had three wives, the second of whom was the supposed but not the real mother of the present Rájá, as she was sent away by her husband on account of infidelity, and the Rájá was born during her separation; that on her husband being released and getting a pension of a hundred rupees monthly, she sued him in the Zilla Court for maintenance, which decreed twenty rupees monthly, but that this decree was reversed by the Provincial Court. The Collector, in answer to this petition, denied the illegitimacy of the Rájá, said the accusation was not proved, and that Muja Deo took back the Rájá's mother and lived with her till his death. There can be no doubt of the correctness of the Collector's statement, as it is confirmed by the report of Mr. Thackeray, and by all that I could learn during my short stay on the spot. But Ganjam abounds with pretenders to most of its zemindáries, who are always ready to bring forward petitions full of misstatements and unfounded accusations. In my progress through the district I met with no less than three of these pretenders to Khimidi alone.

The Mandésa Rájá.

In my way south from Ichchápur the Mandésa Rájá met me at one of his own villages. In the earlier part of his life he had been in the Nizam's country, and I believe held some office there, and he afterwards went to Benares. His travels have rendered him more intelligent than most of the other zemindárs, but he oppresses the ryots, and the cultivation of his district is declining, and he is at variance with all the neighbouring zemindárs, among whom is his son-in-law. He is accused by them of having caused several houses to be burned and some murders to be committed, but no proof has ever been brought against him. Even if the charges were true, he is so

much feared that it would be difficult to establish them, as the fear of assassination would deter any person from appearing as a witness against him.

Nothing is more remarkable in passing through the Ganjam district than the complete zemindári influence which prevails, and the little intercourse between the Government and the great body of the people. No village people ever came near me either to solicit favour or to seek redress. For both they look to the zemindárs, and, when necessary, to the Courts. The only complaint I received could hardly be called an exception to the general custom, because it was from salt manufacturers, who had formerly been public servants, and of course accustomed to go to cutcherries. Their complaint was against Padmanábha Deo, the uncle of the Khimidi Rájá. They had filed a bill against him for extorting a sum beyond the legal rent of some land which they held in his estates. But on his entering a bond for refunding the amount, they had gone to court and given in their rázináma;* and when the suit was thus withdrawn, he had sent and forcibly taken the bond he had given, from the umpire in whose hands it had been deposited.

Great influence of the zemindárs.

On the 16th of August I crossed the Chicacole river, and entered the Vizagapatam district. At the village of Siripuram, where I encamped, I was visited by the proprietor, who is also díwán to the Pálkonda Rajah, and is much respected in the country. He told me that his father, who had purchased the estate, fixed money rents on the land, which continued till his death; that he himself still continued, and had no intention of altering them, as they were found to answer; and that his settlements were ryotwár. He apologized for his master not waiting upon me, as he was detained at home by age and sickness. In answer to a question about the state of his master's district, he said that it was not in a very good state, in consequence of the disorders of the hill people. I observed that this must be his own fault, as the hill people were everywhere few in number, and usually under subjection to those of the plains, by whom they must be instigated and supported, or else they could do nothing. He said that this was very true, that the hill people had been formerly under complete subjection to his master, but as he

The Vizagapatam zemindáries: Pálkonda.

* *Rázináma*, a written declaration that a claim has been settled.

had found refuge among them when expelled from his zemindári by the Company some years ago, he had in consequence lost much of his former authority over them, and had not yet been able to regain it. In speaking of banditti he complained that it was difficult to suppress them, because his people were liable to punishment by the Court if they hurt them in seizing them, without which it was almost impossible. I asked him if he had not received the late order not to be afraid of wounding them on such occasions. He said he had, but that it was rendered nearly useless by the clause which stated that the wounding must be when the robbers were in the act of plundering or flying, and that they often knew who the banditti were, and could trace them to their fields and houses; and that unless they were permitted, in cases of resistance, to wound them there, though then neither plundering nor flying, nothing effectual could be done.

Bobbili zemindár.

9. The Bobbili Rájá met me at Suparnam, a large weaving village in his own zemindári. He came on his elephant, attended by his brother-in-law and another person employed in his service chiefly as a legal adviser on account of his supposed knowledge of the regulations. The Rájá is an active, intelligent man, and manages and looks minutely into all his own affairs. He answered with great readiness every question I put to him on the state of his country. He said that it was divided into four parganás, in three of which he collected his rents in money, and in the fourth in grain; that his settlements were made ryotwár, except in a few small villages, which were rented at a fixed sum to the heads of the village; that he gave every ryot a pottah * specifying the amount of his land and his rent; that the rent was fixed, not varying with the seasons, though he frequently in bad seasons granted some remission to the poorer ryots; that the rent which he received in kind in one parganá was not a share of the crop, but a fixed quantity of grain from each ryot, according to the nature and extent of his land; and that he treated his ryots well, as was evident from none of them ever bringing complaints against him before the Court. On my asking him how the state of cultivation in his country was at present, compared to what it had been

* *Pottah*—properly *pattá*—a deed of lease, a document given by the landlord to the tenant, specifying the conditions upon which the land is held, or in ryotwár districts by the Collector to the ryot.

when he succeeded to the zemindári, he said that there was very little increase, because his country being entirely open had long been all cultivated, except what it was necessary to leave waste for pastures, and that, therefore, almost the only increase that had arisen, was from his having repaired some tanks and got better crops from them. The Collector seemed to think that terror was the cause, rather than fair dealing, of there being no complaint against the Rájá. He is rigorous in exacting his dues, but I believe that he is just on the whole, and that were he otherwise, fear would not suppress all complaints in a zemindári so accessible and so defenceless. I had none, and his villages appeared to be populous and thriving. I must, however, make one exception to this favourable account of him, for I have reason to believe that he, as well as many other zemindárs, has resumed ináms without authority.

Vizianagram zemindár.

I received a visit of ceremony from the Rajah of Vizianagram in camp, about twelve miles to the northward of his capital. At Vizianagram I saw several new proprietors, and among others Suryanarayana Ráo, who possesses Rayavaram and two other estates, of which the permanent assessment is Rs. 43,143 in all. He told me that his rents were all ryotwár and in money, excepting one village, where they were paid in kind. As he has the character of a very active man of business, I questioned him as to the state of his villages. He said he had laid out about thirty thousand rupees in repair of tanks and other improvements, by which his rents had been augmented about eight thousand rupees.

Sálúr zemindár.

I received a visit the following day from the zemindár of Sálúr, attended by his díwán. The conversation was, however, carried on by the zemindár himself, who appeared to understand perfectly the affairs of his country. His settlements are ryotwár and for money rents, except where the ryots are very poor, and then he takes the rent in kind. He was satisfied with his situation, and his only complaint was against the Bobbili man, who would not permit him to pass through his country with his naubat* and other marks of distinction. He observed that it was great presumption in the Bobbili man to assume such authority; that they were all zemindárs; that they had all received their honours from the same superior Government of Hyderabad, and that they

* *Naubat*—lit. turn, succession—a band playing at intervals.

were now under the Company, who alone had the right to hinder or authorize the bearing of emblems of distinction. I promised to inquire into the matter.

Embarrassments of the Vizianagram zemindár.

On the 22nd and 23rd of August I had long private conversations with the Rájá of Vizianagram on the state of his affairs. I said I was sorry to see that he had borrowed money, not only to pay off the balance due to the Company in order to get possession of his country, but that he had borrowed from one to two lakhs more for other purposes. He said he had been obliged to borrow on account of his kists, which had come upon him before he had time to prepare for them by his collections. As I had understood that he had given a sunnud to Ánanda Ráo, the late sarishtadár of the Collector, appointing him his díwán upon a salary of a thousand rupees per month, with full power to collect his rents and pay all his debts, I questioned him whether or not this arrangement had been made with his entire consent. After a good deal of hesitation he said that it was not; that he did not wish to employ the sarishtadár, but that the fear of offending higher authority, meaning the Collector, had induced him to agree to it, and that he would dismiss him immediately if I would secure him from the displeasure of the Collector. I told him that he was at liberty to dismiss him whenever he chose, and to employ in his service the person in whom he himself had most confidence, and I exhorted him to pay more attention himself to his affairs, and not to trust too much to any agent. He promised that he would, but I expect little from him. From what I saw of him, as well as from all that I heard, I can give but little faith to what he either says or promises, and I am not certain that the appointment of the late sarishtadár was not entirely a measure of his own, though his fickleness has already made him desirous of a change. I have no doubt the real truth is that the sarishtadár has lent him money, and that the Rájá, for the sake of this money, and also of the aid which his experience might afford on the first taking charge of his country, appointed him díwán, with the intention of getting rid of him as soon as possible. The original sunnud is dated in December, 1820, so that the sarishtadár appears to have secured a new office for himself before he resigned the old one. The Collector assured me that he knew nothing of the sunnud of appointment to the office of

díwán given to the sarishtadár by the Rájá until I mentioned it to him. He said that he had in consequence questioned the sarishtadár, who said that he had accepted the office at the urgent request of the Rájá; that he did not wish to have anything to do with him, and would be glad to give it up; and that he did not consider the sunnud as a document that could give him any claim upon the Rájá. The Collector informed me that the sarishtadár had resigned the service of the Company in consequence of domestic misfortunes; that the death of all his children, and of most of his grandchildren, had made him believe that there was a judgment of Heaven upon him, which could only be mitigated by a pilgrimage to Benares; and that he was preparing for his journey, when he was detained by the earnest entreaties of the Rájá to take charge of his affairs. I must own that I have very little more faith in the sarishtadár than in the Rájá. It has already been seen that before resigning one office he had secured another. He remains in the Company's service during all the time that the Rájá's country is in their hands, and when he himself, under the Collector, has the entire charge of all its affairs. When it is to be given up to the Rájá, he resigns the Company's service, and soon after appears as the Rájá's díwán, so that he follows the country wherever it goes, and his pilgrimage to Benares has ended in one from the cutcherry of the Collector to that of the Rájá. There is great reason to suppose that he encouraged the Rájá in calling for the restoration of his country, and assisted him in raising the loans to pay off the Company's balance, in order that he might himself have the management of his affairs. The period chosen for the restoration of the country was the most unfavourable that could have been selected for the Rájá. It was the month of April, when one kist was already due, and two more were to be paid in the two following months. The Rájá was not prepared, and was in consequence forced to borrow money to discharge the April kist. When I asked him why he hurried the measure so much to his own disadvantage, since, by waiting till the end of the Faslí in July, the kists would have been realized from the country, and on taking charge in the beginning of the year he would have had an interval of some months to make his arrangements before any kist to the Company

became due, he answered that he had no particular anxiety himself on the subject, but that he was urged by the people about him to hasten the measure. I believe, however, that he wished for the change, but that he would have waited till the end of the year, had he been aware of the difficulty in which its being made at an earlier period, would have involved him; and had the Collector stated this objection to the Board of Revenue, Government would certainly have deferred the restoration of the country till the end of the Faslí, and saved the Rája from very heavy loss.

The proposed entail Regulation.

In the course of conversation the Rájá himself introduced the subject of the proposed entail Regulation for ancient zemindáries. He observed that he, as well as all zemindárs who understood the matter and acted for themselves, was anxious for its introduction; that he had had communications from many zemindárs and their principal advisers regarding it, and that some of them had wished him to object to the measure, but that the authors of the objections were either money-lenders or servants of the zemindárs, who wished to obtain a part of his possessions. He said that whatever he did, his example would be followed by all the rest. I have no doubt of this, because his family, though modern, compared to many of the others, has yet, from the extent of its possessions, been long regarded as the first among the northern zemindárs.

Unsatisfactory management of the zemindári when under the Collector.

The collections from Vizianagram, while in the hands of the Collector, from June, 1815, to April, 1822, were on an average about 8½ lakhs of rupees annually. They might under skilful management have been Rs. 70,000 per annum more, as had been the case under a former díwán, from 1809 to 1812, and about Rs. 20,000 per annum might have been saved in the charges; and had this been done, the Rájá might have been free from debt, instead of owing about nine lakhs of rupees. For a part of this sum he has given assignments upon his zemindári, not redeemable after a certain period, and they will be lost for ever unless we again interfere to assist him, for he is careless and profuse, and these habits have become worse from his intercourse with Europeans and his fondness for their customs, which have had the effect of making him add the most frivolous of their expenses to those which are common to his own caste. Although I think that his debts might have been discharged during the eight years that

his country was in our hands, I do not impute any blame to the Collector for the failure in this respect; for when it is considered that he had never before been in the revenue line, that he was unacquainted with the language, and that his cutcherry was inefficient, like that of all permanently settled districts, as much appears to have been done as could have been expected.

The Rajahmundry Collectorate. The Golgonda zemindári. On the 29th of August I entered the Rajahmundry* Collectorate, and was on the same day visited by the zemindár of Golgonda and his díwán, the late outlaw Náganna, who appears to be the leading man both in this zemindári and the neighbouring one of Mádugala, both belonging to Vizagapatam. I found that his influence in Mádugala arose from a considerable part of the district being mortgaged to him. He has now too much at stake to have any inducement to run the risk of turning plunderer. He promised to exert himself in taking up all banditti. He observed that it was as much his interest as the Company's to suppress them, as they were equally hurtful to both the zemindári and the sirkár districts. He stated, and I believe with truth, that the party which robbed Mr. Shuter's house, near Bimlipatam, were collected from different quarters, and had no fixed leaders. He said that the rents of the zemindári were almost entirely collected in money. On the following day I was visited by the son of the zemindár of Madugala and the díwán, but they could add nothing to the information which had already been given by Náganna.

The Peddapur zemindári. On the 31st of August, I received a visit at Annur from the Rájá of Peddapur and his brother, who is also his díwán. The Rájá complained much of his distressed situation. He said that the zemindári was held by the Collector, pending a suit in Court between the second widow of the late Rájá and himself, and that she claimed it for her adopted child. He asserted that, though the eldest widow had a right to manage the zemindári during life, and to adopt an heir, none of the other widows had, when there was a dayádi † like himself. This and some other questions regarding the law of inheritance seem to call for examination and final settlement, for though they occasion no doubt or difficulty in the ordinary ranks of life, yet when they affect zemindáries, they seem to excite much discussion in our Courts. I have understood that the Rájá and the widow have each already expended about

* Properly *Rájamahendravaram*. † *Dayádi*, a kinsman, a collateral.

a lakh of rupees on this cause. A considerable part of this money has no doubt been applied by their agents to their own use; the rest has gone to the Court servants. The zemindári, which has long been by far the greatest in Rajahmundry, has, within the last ten or twelve years, been reduced above one-half by the expense of disputed succession.

The Pitthápur zemindári.

On the 1st of September I received a visit from the Pitthápur Rájá on entering his district. He complained that his zemindári had been assessed higher than any of the rest, because it had been done by the estimate of the Committee of Circuit without any reference to the produce of subsequent years. I observed that the punctuality with which he had always paid his revenue, and his having within the last few years purchased many other estates from Peddapur and other districts, were proofs that he could not have been very much overassessed. He said that the time of correcting this was now gone by, but that he hoped it was not too late to rectify one error of which he had cause to complain, namely a charge upon him of Madras pagodas 2,706 for the lands and rusúms* of the mazamdárs,† made over to him in place of Madras pagodas 1195-24, their true annual produce. That this over-valuation had been made to the Committee of Circuit by the mazamdárs, when they became aware that their lands were to be commuted for an annual pension to themselves. But, from the report made to me by the Collector, the error appears to have originated with the Special Commission, who added to the revenue of the district a sum of Madras pagodas 1325-21 on account of rusúms not received from the villages, but paid by the zemindár from his own treasury to the mazamdárs, and the sum of Madras pagodas 185 included in the revenues of the zemindár by the Committee of Circuit; but the land from which it arose having been subsequently given by the zemindár in inám to the mazamdárs, it was a second time added to the revenue by the Special Commission. These two sums, making together Madras pagodas 1510-21, are the difference claimed by the zemindár.

Family differences.

He mentioned the conduct of his wife and her brother, his late díwán, who had carried off from his house in open

* *Rusúm*, fees levied from tenants for particular purposes.

† *Mazamdár*, the custodian of the revenue accounts. The duties of this officer are now performed in the Madras Presidency by an officer designated *Talug Serishladár*.

day by force a great part of his property, Rs. 424,000 in money, jewels, &c.; their having set up a boy, his wife's sister's son by a dayádi of the Rájá, as his adopted son, and filed a bill in Court to force him to make an allowance to the boy, though he had never adopted him. That he had himself suffered the disgrace of being obliged to bring his family misfortunes into Court, and that the boy had been registered as his heir in Court, without his knowledge, by his díwán. If the fact of the registry should be established, the boy has merely a right to maintenance, as the Rájá has now a son of his own. The registry in such matters is unusual, and therefore liable to suspicion. The old rule should be observed, of making a communication to the Collector at the time, which would provide an additional check upon fraud. The Rájá said that he made his settlements almost entirely in money, and usually once in three years, sometimes with the heads of villages, and sometimes with the ryots, and that money settlements had always been the usage. His country is well managed and highly cultivated. He is rich, and was one of the very few zemindárs who had kept out of Court until he was forced there by his wife and her relations, who probably wish to involve him in expensive suits, in order that they may make an easy purchase of a part of his zemindári.

The Rampa zemindár.

During a period of twelve days that I was detained at Rajahmundry by the overflowing of the Godávari, I saw most of the proprietors as well as all the zemindárs of the district, and among others I was visited by the Rampa zemindár, who is said to have been always independent. This has probably been owing to the poverty of his country, which is barren, mountainous, and unhealthy, and of which the chief produce is dry grain. He had never been at Rajahmundry before, and only saw the Godávari when he visited the Collector this year at Polavaram. Four villages said to have been once held by his family were granted to him by Government in 1813, on which occasion documents were interchanged by him and the Collector. On his part he acknowledges the sovereignty of the Company, promises to aid in securing offenders, and engages not to collect duties on the Godávari. It is singular enough that he engages to relinquish duties, at the desire of the Collector, which he never could have levied, as his country does not touch the Godávari, and that Govern-

ment direct the Rampa country, which he had always possessed, to be restored. The four villages given to him by the Company are the principal source of his revenue, and will, I think, have the effect of insuring his good behaviour. He has been accused of having instigated and assisted in the late attack on Polavaram, but, I believe, without any ground whatever. He is a little man, with a singularly blunt and abrupt manner, and, contrary to the custom of zemindárs, he was very plainly, or rather poorly dressed, and had very much the appearance of a common naik of peons. I had several conversations with his accuser Jaggaiya, who complained that the Rampa zemindár and his other enemies were encouraged by the Collector. Among his enemies he reckoned the zemindár of Ellore, who, he asserted, had sent peons to join the party by which he was attacked in March last. It is very likely that peons did actually go from the Ellore zemindári, because Venkata Narasimha, as well as all the neighbouring zemindárs, is indignant at seeing so ancient a zemindári as Polavaram in the possession of an upstart like Jaggaiya, who a few years since was only the curnum of a village. The main body of the assailants, however, certainly came from some of Jaggaiya's own hill villages, with the reddies or head men of which he has long had a dispute about the nature of their rents—they maintaining that they are a fixed quit-rent, and he that they rise and fall with the cultivation, as in other villages. I believe that his statement is correct, but that he has been too hasty in raising their rents, and that they wish to drive him out of the district, because he is a low man, and because he is too well acquainted with its affairs to permit them to change their former situation of head ryots into that of tributary chiefs. I told him that he would have the support of the Collector in all his just rights, but not if he went beyond them. Although there was no doubt of the peons who attacked him having come from his own villages, yet, as no proof had been obtained of any particular individual having been present, I directed the Collector to prosecute his inquiries on the subject.

The Ellore zemindár.

In my way through the Masulipatam district, I saw all the zemindárs except Venkata Narasimha, of Ellore. He lost his wife some years ago, and has ever since shut himself up, sleeping all day and sitting up during the night, and almost

continually intoxicated. He never saw the late Collector, but on hearing of my approach, he cut off his beard and paid a visit to the present Collector, and announced his intention of meeting me. He did not, however, make his appearance when I encamped at Ellore; but at the encampment beyond it an apology was received, saying that he had been prevented from seeing me by indisposition. The real cause was his being unfit to be seen; he is an indulgent landlord, is much liked by the inhabitants, and his country is in general very well cultivated. I saw nothing remarkable about the other zemindárs; they are of but recent origin compared with those of the more northern districts. They never had much power of exciting disturbances, and what they had, is now lost by our influence in the Nizam country preventing their obtaining refuge among his tributaries. Almost all of them have been engaged in lawsuits, and are in consequence very poor.

I crossed the Kistna at Bezwáda, and on my way through the Guntúr district, I saw all the zemindárs and most of the principal inhabitants. The whole of the district had come into the hands of the Collector either from the minority of zemindárs, or from suits then pending in Court, or from arrears of revenue. The two sons of the late Vása Reddi, zemindár of Chintapalli, both complained to me of the distress they suffer from the temporary resumption of their zemindáries, and of the heavy debt which is accumulating upon them by their lawsuit about their father's property. They are both sons by adoption. The object of the elder is to obtain the whole zemindári, on the ground that the second adoption is illegal; that of the second is to retain the share which he obtained during his father's life. They are both tired of the suit. I recommended to them to withdraw and to settle the matter amicably. The younger is of course anxious to do this. The elder likewise expressed his willingness, but his native advisers are against it, and I imagine the suit will proceed. The Guntúr district.

The zemindárs of Guntúr are of modern date. They are the descendants of revenue officers, and are of a character entirely different from those of Ganjam and Vizagapatam. They have no predatory habits; they have no unhealthy hills and jungles, in which they might find refuge if they opposed Government, and they may be regarded rather as a higher Modern origin of the Guntúr zemindárs.

class of ryots than as military chiefs. Before leaving the Northern Sirkárs, of which Guntúr is the most southern, I shall make some general observations upon them.

General remarks on the Northern Sirkárs. Fulness and accuracy of the information furnished regarding them by the Committee of Circuit.

Although the Sirkárs are our earliest possessions, there are none, perhaps, of which we have so little accurate knowledge in everything that regards the condition of the people. Little or nothing has been added to the information given, forty years ago, by the Committee of Circuit.* By being so much nearer to the time of the conquest of these districts, they had the advantage of communicating with many of the local officers and inhabitants who had lived under the native Government, and they had thereby a better opportunity than we now have, of ascertaining what had then been the rights of the different classes of the people, and the rules and customs by which the public revenue was secured. They had not themselves been brought up under any particular system of internal administration, and were therefore more likely than their successors to examine what they saw without partiality.

Nature of the revenue systems obtaining under the Hindu and Mahomedan Governments.

The revenue system in the Sirkárs, as described by them, has a general resemblance to that of many other provinces of India. The people had no property in land; they were poor in their appearance, and oppressed. Under the old Hindu Government they paid half of the produce in kind; but after the Mahomedan conquest, the zemindárs employed in the management of the country imposed a shist or fixed assessment on the land, to which extra assessments were afterwards added, by which the share of the ryots was reduced nominally to one-third, but actually to one-fifth, of the gross produce in rice lands, which formed the chief cultivation of the country. In dry grain cultivation the shares of the ryot and the Govern-

* The Committee of Circuit, which was appointed under orders from the Court of Directors, was composed of five members of the Council of Fort St. George. According to the Fifth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons (1812), the Committee of Circuit was directed to 'inquire into the state of the Northern 'Sirkárs and the jágír, by ascertaining 'with all possible exactness the pro'duce of the respective countries, the 'number of the inhabitants, the state 'of the manufactures, the fortified 'places; the military strength of each 'Rájá, zemindár, or landholder; the 'expense of his household, and that of 'his troops, and the means he had of 'defraying those expenses; the gross 'amount of the revenues, the articles 'from which they arose, the mode by 'which they were collected, the charges 'of collection, the specific proportion 'usually received by the Rájá or ze'mindár, and that which custom or 'usage allotted to the cultivator as 'the reward of his labour.' The Committee of Circuit appears to have been originally appointed about 1777, and was abolished by the Government of Fort St. George in 1778, but under orders from home was revived in 1783, and was engaged in prosecuting its inquiry until 1788.

ment were equal. These were the shares which prevailed in the Chicacole Sirkár. In the more southern Sirkárs of Rajahmundry and Ellore the ryot's share was higher. It was in rice land forty, fifty, and sixty per cent., but he did not actually receive more than one-fourth or one-fifth. In dry grain it was one-half. More favourable rates were allowed to certain privileged castes and to strangers than to the fixed ryots. The rents were paid in money. The shist was a fixed sum; the extra assessments were usually regulated by the price of the grain, or by both the price and the estimated quantity. The Committee describe the revenue system then followed in the Sirkárs as differing very little from that which had existed under the Mahomedan Government. The principal alteration consisted in the practice in many places of regulating both the shist and extra assessments by an estimate and valuation of the crop; but as the share allowed to the ryot was still the same, the change was perhaps, on the whole, rather unfavourable to him.

Recommendations of the Committee of Circuit.

The Committee recommended the abolition of the shist and extra assessments; the revival of an annual estimate and valuation of the crops; that the ryot should have one-third of the produce in the best rice lands, two-fifths in ordinary, and one-half in poor and dry lands; that he should pay in money, except when unable from poverty or other cause. They thought that a fixed rent could not be established either by giving the ryots long leases or a property in the soil, while they 'retain their present unresisting habits,' and that it could only be done when 'a judicial establishment shall have long taken place,' and 'accustomed the native to know the extent of his rights.' These opinions are nearly the same as were expressed thirty-two years afterwards by the Coimbatore Commission.

Diversity of revenue systems obtaining under the Hindu Governments.

The Committee state that fixed money rents, under the name of shist, had been introduced about sixty years before by the Rájá of Vizianagram; Mr. Oram states that they were introduced after the Mahomedan conquest, which would make them above a century older. It seems to be very uncertain by whom they were brought in, and to be as likely to have been done by Hindus as Mahomedans, for the Mahomedans usually left all these revenue arrangements to Hindus. The Committee appear to have adopted the opinion so common

among Europeans, that under the Hindu princes the revenue was always a share of the crop paid in kind. This belief seems to have arisen from Europeans having acquired their first knowledge of native customs on the coast, where the produce being chiefly rice, and the cultivation depending on the supply of water from artificial sources, often very uncertain, rendered it almost impossible to have established a fixed money rent so high as to have answered the demands of the State. We are certain that the Hindus had no one uniform revenue system; for we find in the interior of India under Hindu governments a variety of systems, and founded more frequently on a fixed money rent than on a share of the crop paid in kind. Collecting the revenue in kind is a clumsy, but very simple mode of realizing it; no contrivance is required; whether the crop be poor or abundant, a share of it can easily be taken, and Government can always draw from the ryot as much as he can possibly pay. The case is very different under money rents. If the assessment is to be a fixed one, it must be so moderate as to meet the contingencies of the seasons in ordinary times, and a more liberal share must therefore be allowed to the ryot than when he pays in kind; and the consequence is that when the ryots pay a fixed money rent, they are usually more substantial than when they pay by a share of the crop. My conversations with the different zemindárs were directed to ascertain the way in which they severally realized their revenues. I found that they followed various systems; that some received their rents in kind because they were traders; that some received them in kind because their ryots were poor; that some received their rents in money fluctuating in amount with the price and produce; that some had fixed money rents, either for a term of years or without limitation, and that some made their settlements with the ryots, and others with the heads of villagers or with renters. When I see in a tract of country not exceeding four hundred miles in length all these diversities of system among Hindu chiefs, each pursuing that which he thought best, I cannot for a moment doubt that at least as great a variety must have prevailed in so extensive a country as India under its numerous native princes.

The village and district officers.

The different classes of village and district officers, from the zemindár down to the village watchman, appear from

the reports of the Committee to have been the same nearly as in the neighbouring countries. The zemindár was appointed by the Nawáb of the province and confirmed by the subahdár. The naidu, or head of the village, settled petty disputes when the parties were willing, and he collected the rents from the ryots with the curnums; but the Committee remark that the curnum's accounts, which were meant to be a check both on the exactions of the zemindár and the frauds of the villagers, were rendered of no use by his dependent state on the zemindár.

Recommendations of the Committee of Circuit regarding the zemindárs.

Mr. Oram * proposed the gradual reduction of all the zemindárs, except the Deos, or ancient hereditary Rájás, and one of his arguments for their reduction is, that 'while they 'have revenues at their disposal, the integrity of Europeans 'and the public interest must be considered as precarious.' The Committee did not go so far; but they maintained that zemindárs had no right to alienate lands not authorized by their sunnuds, and they recommended that such alienations only should be continued as had valid grants, or had been held for twenty-four years, paying one-fifth of the gross produce to Government, and that all zemindárs and managers should be restricted from making alienations, and be directed to resume all such as fell vacant by death, &c. They asserted that the peace and good order thus established in the country was more owing to the reduction of the other Rájás under Kuram Ráz than to the Company's Government, and they therefore recommended that the Rájás of Bobbili, Sálur, &c., then in the hands of Kuram Ráz, should not be restored, but be released and reside as pensioners at Vizagapatam, and that the zemindárs of Golgonda and Mádugala, then tributary to Kuram Ráz should be dependent on him, because both districts were very unhealthy, were the retreats of thieves, and were more easily secured by him than by the Company's troops.

Adoption of the permanent settlement. Its effects on the country.

The plans of the Committee of Circuit might in general have been adopted with great advantage, but nothing was done upon them. The Chiefs and Councils † were abolished, and Collectors appointed in their room in 1794, but the same

* Mr. Oram appears to have been secretary to, and afterwards one of the most active members of, the Committee of Circuit.

† These were the Provincial Chiefs and Councils which were appointed in 1769 to take charge of four out of the five Northern Sirkárs, viz. Chicacole, Rajahmundry, Ellore, and Kondapalle. The fifth Sirkár, Guntúr, was not acquired until 1788. The whole political, civil, and revenue administration of the Sirkárs devolved upon these Provincial Councils.

system of revenue continued with little alteration until the introduction of the permanent settlement. The want of sufficient information caused this settlement to be unequal. This would have been of less consequence, had it not in many places been too high, which will make most of the new estates, and probably some of the old zemindáries, revert hereafter to Government. We have left ourselves in the Sirkárs with so few means of acquiring information, that it is not easy to say, after a trial of twenty years, whether the fixed or permanent settlement has been beneficial or otherwise to the country. It has been favourable to the cultivation of estates whose assessment is moderate and whose proprietors are active, but it has not improved the condition of the ryots generally, and has certainly rendered it worse than before in all those villages which have come back to Government with diminished resources. It has not been favourable to the curnums and village servants, because the landholders have displaced many and deprived others of their just dues; it has not been favourable to inámdárs, a great number of whom have been ejected from their ináms without any authority whatever, and their lands converted to the use of the zemindár or proprietor without paying any revenue to Government; and it has been unfavourable to all the old zemindárs by making their lands liable to sale for private debts, by exposing them to frequent lawsuits, and by stripping them of the greatest part of their possessions, as in the case of the Rajah of Peddapur, and it has also been unfavourable to the authority of Government and to the efficiency of the Collectors and Magistrates.

Ill effects of the restoration of the petty zemindáries.

The weakness of the authority of Government in the Sirkárs is owing to our restoring the districts of the petty zemindárs, who had been subdued, contrary to the opinion of the Committee of Circuit; to our erecting by the permanent settlement a new set of proprietary zemindárs; to our not reserving a single village in which we could exercise direct control over the ryots, and to our transferring to these proprietors the curnums, who are the source of all information. In open countries long under the immediate authority of Government, the permanent settlement, though it tends to conceal the real state of the country, does not seriously affect the public authority by encouraging resistance or rebellion; but in mountainous unhealthy districts like the Northern Sirkárs,

the greater part of which has long been in the hands of a number of petty Rájás, some claiming independence, and all constantly ready to withhold their tribute and to raise disturbances whenever they see a favourable opportunity; the permanent settlement has the effect of weakening the authority of Government over the whole province, and of rendering the establishment of security and of good order more difficult than before. When we received the Sirkárs from the Nizam, a considerable portion of them was sirkár land in the hands of the officers of Government, and was generally composed of the most fertile and populous tracts along the seacoast. By having direct authority over a great population and over the most wealthy part of the community, the influence of Government increased daily, both over its own districts and those of the petty Rájás, and would in time have become sufficient, without the aid of military force, to have ensured obedience and tranquillity; but by creating new zemindárs and proprietors, and divesting ourselves of the sirkár lands, from the immediate possession of which our influence almost entirely arose, we have placed the prospect of the establishment of subordination and good order among the petty rájáships at a greater distance than ever. We are much more powerful now than in 1784, when the Committee made their report on the Sirkárs, but we are not now so able to establish the authority of Government over them as then, because at that time a considerable part of the country was sirkár land, and many of the smaller and most predatory chiefs have been reduced by the Rájá of Vizianagram, and their territories annexed to his own; but now we have made over the sirkár lands to new zemindárs, and restored all the reduced Rájás, and thereby augmented our difficulties, because it is much easier for us to reduce one great Rájá than several small ones. It would have been easier in 1784 to have reduced Vizianagram, then including eight or ten zemindáries which it had subjugated, than to have reduced any of those petty zemindáries singly; because it is not force that opposes us, but a mountainous and unhealthy country, and those chiefs who have the fewest followers can the most easily elude the pursuit of regular troops, and as they have less at stake than a great chief, they are more apt to be tempted to commit depredations for the sake of plunder, and as their numbers are greater, the chances

of disturbances are also greater from them than from the principal Rájás. Our system in the Sirkárs is one of forbearance, and we are obliged to connive at irregularities which would not be tolerated in other provinces, lest we should be compelled to use force and involve ourselves in a petty warfare against banditti in a pestilential climate among hills and jungles. I saw a very striking instance of this during my stay at Khimidi, and which I might never have known anything of had I not gone there. The Terrast lands and villages are noticed by the Committee of Circuit, and are described as possessions held on a favourable tenure under the Rájás by peons, for the purpose of protecting the country from the incursions of plunderers from the hills and countries beyond the Ghâts. These villages are situated on or at the foot of the western hills, but the peons made no attempt to resist the passage of the Pindáries through them in 1816, because they are too weak and unwarlike for such enterprise; but I found that, notwithstanding this, they had had resolution enough to have withheld their quit-rent ever since this irruption, and that the Collector had not ventured to enforce its payment, so that the whole of the last five years' rent is now due. The petty chiefs of these peons are called bissois. The number belonging to Khimidi is nine, and they were formerly entirely under the Rájá, and paid their rents through him to the Company. This was the proper arrangement, and ought not to have been disturbed; but the bissois were very injudiciously, some years ago, separated from the Rájá's jurisdiction and placed immediately under the Collector. This measure was no doubt intended to increase the authority of Government and to lessen that of the Rájá, and would have had this effect, had the villages lain between the zemindári and the sea; but as they lie at the foot of the hills beyond Khimidi, where the Collector cannot get at them without passing through the whole of the zemindári, he has in consequence lost his authority over them, and cannot make them pay, but the Rájá can, and they ought therefore to be again transferred to him.

No zemindári once forfeited for rebellion should ever be restored.

The affairs of the Sirkárs can never be well administered, nor the great body of the people be protected against oppression, nor the country be secured from disturbance and the incursions of plunderers, until our Government becomes more respected in those provinces than it is at present. The system

which has already been adopted there, renders a speedy introduction of any great or general improvement quite impracticable, but much may be done in time by pursuing steadily measures calculated to give the Government more weight in the country, and more direct intercourse with and control over the people. No zemindári once forfeited for rebellion, should ever be restored, whatever temporary evil the retention of it might occasion. All estates falling in should invariably be kept and annexed to the sirkár lands. The raising of sepoys among the hill districts is not unusual at present, but it should be encouraged, as it tends through their means to make the inhabitants better acquainted with us, and to give some of them an immediate interest in the stability of our power.

Advantages to be derived from the extension of the sirkár lands.

The gradual extension of the sirkár lands should be our main object, because it is by having the direct possession and management of landed property that we can best protect the ryots, grant them remissions of rent, assist them in agricultural improvements, and attach them to our Government. The extension of the sirkár lands gives us also a great influence over all the military classes residing upon them, as we have thereby the power of granting them indulgences in rent and other matters in their several villages. Were the open country all sirkár land, we should have little difficulty in raising peons, whenever it was necessary, sufficient to quell any disturbances among the hill zemindáries, with little or no aid from regular troops; but while the open country is in the hands either of old or new zemindárs, the peons raised in the villages will never act cordially in our service, or be deserving of any confidence, because we have no patronage in their villages, and can do nothing for them or their families, while the proprietor or zemindár of the village, if he be secretly adverse to the cause in which they are employed, can do them much serious injury in various ways. When the open country becomes sirkár land, a strong and just Government operates silently upon the people, and through them upon those of the neighbouring hill zemindáries. The better class of traders and cultivators in both districts find that their interest is promoted by the tranquillity of the country. Their influence gradually extends to the leading men of the zemindári and to the Rájá and his military followers, and discourages them

from raising disturbance; and these men, when they see that the body of the people is against them, and that the Government is strong, remain quiet, and in time lose their turbulent and predatory habits.

Importance of rendering the Collector's cutcherries more efficient.

The inefficiency of the Collector's cutcherries has also contributed, though not in so great a degree as the sale of the sirkár lands, to weaken the due authority of Government in the Northern Sirkárs. One of the benefits expected from the permanent settlement was its enabling us to reduce the Collector's establishment to a few writers. In consequence of this measure, he is without any person capable of assisting him in revenue matters when any difficulty arises. Instead of being surrounded with a body of intelligent native officers, his cutcherry is in this respect inferior to that of some of the zemindárs, and is held in no respect by the people. It may be said that a cutcherry was not necessary, because we wanted no details under the permanent settlement, and because when any arrears accrued, we had only to sell the land in order to discharge them. But it might have occurred that estates would often come under the Collector's management by falling under the Court of Wards, by decrees of Court, and by other causes, and that it would then be necessary to have men versed in revenue details to manage them. By not having such men the Collector is compelled, when a zemindári comes into his hands, to hire such persons as he can find, in order to manage its revenue; but as persons taken by chance in this manner can seldom know much of revenue, or be very trustworthy, the affairs of the zemindári are usually mismanaged, to the great loss of the proprietor and the discredit of Government. As we undertake the management of such estates, it is evidently our duty to take every practicable means to provide men qualified for the task. But no man can be so qualified without practice, and the Collector, therefore, instead of dismissing the manager of a zemindári whenever the temporary duty for which he was hired is over, should have such a small permanent addition to his cutcherry as would enable him, whenever a zemindári came under his charge, to allot to the superintendence of it the services of a man of experience from his fixed establishment in place of those of a stranger. This measure would occasion some additional expense, but which would probably be compensated by the increase of revenue

from better management, and might at any rate be charged to the zemindárs for whose benefit it was incurred.

Importance of exempting the ancient zemindáries from being sold under decrees of Courts.

There is another point which requires some arrangement in order to promote the continuance of tranquillity in the Sirkárs, namely, the securing to the ancient Rájás the possession of their old hereditary domains. This subject has been long before the Board, and all that is wanted might be accomplished by passing a Regulation placing these domains on the same footing as they were previous to the introduction of the Judicial Code, by which they will be exempted from sequestration on account of any private debt which may hereafter be contracted. The object of this measure is not only to save the families of the old zemindárs from ruin, but to save ourselves from being forced into hostilities in order to support the claims of money lenders. The zemindárs, but more especially those of the hill districts, will often submit peaceably to the resumption of their zemindári by Government, when they will oppose by arms its transfer to a merchant or saukár. They are not dishonoured, they think, by their possessions falling into the hands of Government; but they consider themselves as disgraced by seeing the abodes of their ancestors become the property of a low trader, and this feeling, as has been already noticed, was the cause of the long and harassing warfare in the Mohiri zemindári. As the Regulations now stand, we must, whenever a saukár obtains a decree against a zemindár for a part or the whole of the zemindári on account of a debt, support him by force both in getting and maintaining possession of it; and hence we are every day liable to be dragged into a petty warfare among unhealthy hills, where an enemy is hardly ever seen, where numbers of valuable lives are lost from the climate, and where we often lose but never gain reputation. We have hostilities enough on account of public objects, and it is undoubtedly our duty to adopt such measures as may remove the necessity of our being obliged to have recourse to them in support of private speculations.

The whole of Guntúr at present under the Collector's management.

The whole province of Guntúr, though permanently settled, has at present from various causes fallen under the immediate temporary management of the Collector. This circumstance, by giving him the direct control of the village and zemindári servants, is favourable to his reducing the extra peons raised during the Pindári irruption. In speaking

of them to me, he said that their services might be dispensed with without any inconvenience. I would therefore recommend that he be directed to discharge as many of them as can be spared.

Summary of measures required to improve the administration of the Northern Sirkárs.

On the whole, it appears to me that, in order to render the local administration of the Sirkárs gradually more efficient, it will be advisable to restore no lands which have once reverted to Government; to restore the Terrast peons of Khimidi to the direct authority of the Rájá; to improve the revenue establishment of the Collectors; to pass a regulation for securing to the ancient zemindárs their hereditary domains; to pass a regulation for enabling the Collectors either to restore or to assess such ináms as have been resumed without authority since the permanent settlement, according as they may have been held under valid titles or otherwise.

Nellore. Inefficiency of the cutcherry officials.

The province of Nellore bears so close a resemblance to that of Arcot, both in the character of its inhabitants and the nature of its revenue, as to require no particular observation. The decennial lease appears to have been more nominal than real, and the collections of each year to have been much rather upon an estimate of the crop of that year than upon the lease engagement. But it was impossible to obtain any accurate information regarding the manner in which the settlements were made, because the sarishtadárs were mere English writers, and unacquainted with revenue affairs. Where the heads are incapable, there can be little control over the subordinate officers, and the revenue must suffer from ignorance as well as from fraud. The employment of English writers as sarishtadárs is a very general practice from Nellore to Ganjam, and ought to be abolished. The Board of Revenue cannot interfere in the appointment of the Collectors' cutcherry servants, but it is their duty to order them to dismiss those who are evidently unfit for the situations in which they are employed. In my way through the Nellore district I was met by the Rájás of Venkatagiri and Kálastri. They have, in the enjoyment of long peace and security, lost the military habits of their ancestors. They are both well-disposed men, fond of ease and tranquillity. They attend readily to all the orders of the Collector, and seem only to be anxious for a continuance of the present state of things.

ON CERTAIN ALLEGED EMBEZZLEMENTS OF PUBLIC MONEY IN THE SALEM DISTRICT.

25th March, 1823.

Objects of the measures to be taken on the discovery of abuses in the revenue administration. Difficulties experienced in the present case.

In all cases of abuse in the revenue administration, the first object is to check the evil by removing the authors of it; the second is to punish them; and the third to recover the amount embezzled. The first has been attained by the removal of the late Collector and his principal servants. The other two have not, because there were circumstances which rendered success impracticable, and which, though they might have been suspected, could not have been certainly known to exist without our having first gone through the investigation. These circumstances were chiefly the lapse of seventeen years between the commencement of the abuses and that of the inquiry into them; the death or absence of many of the persons most capable of giving information; the destruction or concealment of original accounts; the unlimited confidence reposed in Narsaiya by the Collector; the complete control which Narsaiya, without holding any situation of trust, exercised over all the native servants, and over both the Huzzúr and district treasuries; the facility afforded by the long duration of his power, for removing every document and conciliating every person likely to appear against him; and the advantage which, after being warned of his danger by the investigation in the neighbouring province of Coimbatore, he derived from having an interval of four years to provide for his safety. The inquiry in Salem was, from all these causes, much more difficult than that in Coimbatore, and the difficulty was greatly increased by the cautious character of Narsaiya, and by the disorganized state of the country. In Coimbatore a

great degree of regularity prevailed, as the country was still under the ancient system, and the potails and curnums of villages assisted in the inquiry. But in Salem many of the old potails had been displaced to make room for adventurers as landholders, and many of the curnums had become both proprietors and curnums, and could no longer be regarded as public servants, bound to enable the Collector, by their accounts, to check unauthorized exactions; and many of them, as well as of the other muttadárs, had destroyed not only their own annual accounts, but those of the survey, in order to conceal their unauthorized demands on the ryots, both from the Collector and the Courts of Justice.

Evidence insufficient for the conviction of the chief culprit in a Court of Justice.

Under all these difficulties, therefore, it is not at all surprising that such evidence has not been obtained of Narsaiya's frauds as would convict him in a Court of Judicature. It is however, I think, manifest, from the nature of the documents brought forward by the Commissioner, that the peculations of Narsaiya have at least equalled the amount stated by him; and that, if in some cases they have been less, they have in others been undoubtedly more. Narsaiya was too wary to venture upon extensive peculations in the treasury, because they were much more liable to detection there than anywhere else. He could commit them in many other ways with very little danger, by ordering the tahsildárs verbally to reserve a part of their collections for him, and receiving it from them privately when he visited their districts; by receiving money in the same manner from the gumáshtas employed in the collection of the customs and licences; by making stoppages from the pay of servants, and taking their receipts for the full amount; and by receiving money privately from the parties for the sale and transfer of estates. The great and permanent increase of the licences and customs since the suspension of Narsaiya is a sufficient proof of his frauds in those articles of revenue, and the numerous depositions on oath of the landholders leave little doubt of his frauds in the transfer of estates, which appears to have been by far the most fertile source of his gains. It is obvious that when a man like Narsaiya never receives a bribe from an individual, nor public money from a revenue servant in the presence of a third person, we can have no positive evidence, nor any other than assertion against assertion. But when, in opposition to the single

denial of Narsaiya, we have the oaths of five or six hundred persons, most of them his equals, and many of them belonging to a higher class of society, I cannot but regard their declarations as the general voice of the country, and as leaving no doubt of the general truth of their charges against Narsaiya.

Conduct of the late Collector.

I have already in former Minutes stated my opinion of Mr. ——'s conduct, and after having again perused the whole of the voluminous papers connected with his case, I see nothing to render it more favourable. He must, I think, be absolved from everything corrupt. But from his negligence in keeping accounts, he has left it impossible for me to say whether he has or has not unconsciously received more of the public money than was due to him. It appears that he ordered Narsaiya to hold funds at his disposal; that Narsaiya drew from the treasury whatever was necessary for both, kept the money as a kind of joint-stock, and supplied from it the demands of Mr. ——; that one adjustment of this account was made in Faslí 1222 by Mr. —— giving his receipt, according to his own statement, to Narsaiya, but according to Narsaiya's, to the treasury, for upwards of pagodas 11,000, a sum about equal to his allowances as Collector for two whole years; and that, even after all the warnings which Narsaiya had received from the inquiry at Coimbatore, and from Mr. ——'s more recent one in Salem, there was still in September, 1819, when Mr. —— examined the treasury, a deficiency in it of above a lakh of rupees. When I consider these gross irregularities, and the long period during which they were fearlessly practised, I cannot say that the public revenue has not suffered from them. On the contrary, my experience in such matters leaves no doubt on my mind that the public has suffered, and that the deficiency was made good from the revenue, though, from the means which Narsaiya enjoyed of preventing discovery, we have not been able to prove this fact.

Duty of the Board of Revenue to interfere when maladministration is notorious.

The Regulatien * for the punishment of revenue servants will, I hope, have a great effect in securing both the revenue and its inhabitants from a recurrence of such abuses; but under a man like Mr. ——, who never exerted the authority in his hands to check frauds, but abandoned himself blindly to the guidance of a native servant, no regulation whatever could have been of the smallest use. Some greater exercise of

* Madras Regulation IX. of 1822.

executive authority by the Board of Revenue might have been attended with advantage. It had been notorious for many years that Narsaiya, without holding any ostensible office of trust, directed the affairs of the Salem Collectorate. This alone was a sufficient indication that the revenue was mismanaged, and ought to have induced the Board to order the dismissal of Narsaiya. It is not advisable that the Board of Revenue should often meddle with the appointment or dismissal of Collectors' servants, but in extraordinary cases like the present it is their duty to interfere.

STATE OF THE SOUTHERN AND OF THE CEDED DISTRICTS.

5th March, 1824.

THE provinces which I visited in my late tour, namely, the southern division of Arcot, Salem, and the Ceded Districts, are so well known to the Board from the reports of the different Collectors, that it is unnecessary to enter into any details regarding them, and I shall therefore confine myself to a few brief remarks regarding their present condition.

Necessity of a reduction in the assessment of South Arcot.

The cultivation of Arcot certainly has not made the progress which might have been expected during a period of thirty-three years since any hostile army has been in it. The chief cause of the present deserted state of many of the districts was the invasion of Hyder Ali, between 1780 and 1783, when he not only laid waste a great part of the country, but drove away large bodies of the people, but particularly of the younger part, above the Ghâts, from whence very few of them ever returned; another cause was the oppressive management of the Nawâb, from the restoration till the final assumption of the Carnatic; and a third was the exactions of the renters during the triennial and decennial leases. The cultivation is also said to be retarded by the high rate of assessment on the dry land, but especially in the more western districts from Thiâgar to Chittâpett. In the districts where there is a large proportion of wet land, the ryots do not complain, because the assessment of the wet being comparatively lighter, enables them the more easily to pay the rent of both. But in the western districts there is little wet, and where there is only dry, its cultivation is impeded by the rate of assessment. A great portion of these districts is

occupied by jungle, extensive tracts of which have sprung up since Hyder's invasion. To clear this part again by degrees, and to cultivate it as formerly, would be of the greatest advantage to the country. Little or no progress has been made, and little will ever be made in this work, until some reduction can be allowed in the assessment.

Absence of complaints in South Arcot. Accessibility and industry of the Collector.

In my passage through South Arcot nothing struck me so much as the almost total absence of complaint. I never was in any district in any part of India where there was so little. The very few complaints that came before me were all either of a very trifling nature, or had before been examined by the Collector himself.* Great praise is due to him on this account. He hears and sees everything himself, and devotes his whole time to the affairs of his district, so that he is well known to every inhabitant, and all of them have ready access to him at all times. It is not merely that they have ready access, but that he enters into a patient inquiry regarding their case.

Complaints in Salem limited to the case of certain favourable tenures, which had been partially resumed. Proposals on the subject.

In Salem there were very few complaints, and they were in general about private disputes, which the Collector had no authority to determine. Almost the only complaint of a public nature against the Collector, or rather the Government, was that by the muttadárs, who claim the mohturpha† on the ground of its being included in the assets on which their rents were fixed. I believe that in many instances the articles composing the mohturpha were specified, and only a part of them entered in the assets. The question, however, has now been carried into Court for trial. The complaint next in importance to the mohturpha, was one regarding agrahárams,‡ and the small portions of inám land denominated bhattvarti. Both had been resumed under Tippoo Sultan, but the act was so unpopular that his servants never carried it but partially into effect. They rated the agrahárams at a low rent, about a half or a third of their proper amount, and they left the bhattvarti free. Colonel Read left both in the same state; but Major Macleod and his successor made some addition to the rent of the agrahárams, left all bhattvarti assessed at less than four pagodas free, but imposed a small quit-rent on all yielding above that sum. Some remission might be granted

* The Collector referred to was the late Mr. Brooke Cunliffe.

† *Mohturpha*—properly *muhtarafa*—a tax on trades and professions.

‡ *Agrahdram*, a village occupied by Brahmans, usually held either rent-free or at a reduced rate of assessment.

to such of the agrahárams as are assessed higher than others of the same class, and the quit-rent on bhattvarti might be reduced one-half. The sum is trifling to Government, and would be a great boon to the owners. The bhattvarti was originally almost entirely given by local officers under the native Government without authority, and as it was resumed by Tippoo, it should not be regarded as free inám, but be subjected to a small quit-rent.

Allegations that the failure of the muttadárs was due to overassessment examined.

It has been stated by the Revenue Board, and generally believed, that excessive assessment was the main cause of the early failure of many of the muttadárs in every district, and particularly in Ahtur, where every estate has long since been thrown up. But the present Collector doubts, and, I believe, with justice, the correctness of this opinion, and he is so far from thinking that a large reduction of the assessment is necessary, in order to restore the country to a better state, that he is not satisfied that any is required. There are several reasons for believing that the assessment had very little share in the failure of the permanent mutta system, of which I shall mention three. The first is, that the ryots make no difficulty about cultivating their lands at the survey rates; the second is, that in Ahtur, where the assessment was said to be highest, the ryots cultivate at those rates, and have gone on for the last three years increasing the cultivation; and the third is, that land has in several villages, in most of the districts, and even in Ahtur, reputed the most highly assessed, become a valuable property, and is mortgaged for several years' purchase. The Collector is therefore averse to any reduction of the assessment without further inquiry as to its necessity. I am convinced that none is necessary, if we have no other view than to enable the country in a few years to pay the revenue of the permanent settlement; but that some reduction will be necessary, if we wish the country to rise beyond its former state.

Necessity for additional aid to the tahsildárs.

The Collector's establishment is not constituted so as to render it so efficient as it ought to be. His tahsildárs have none of that class of assistants usually called kárkúns. They are employed by all the native governments, and by our own wherever there is a ryotwár settlement. Each tahsildár has two, three, or more, according to the extent of his district. Each kárkún has a portion of the district

assigned to him, in which he looks after the cultivation, the collections, and the police, and discharges nearly the same duties as the tahsildárs in the whole district. Without such aid it is quite impossible that any tahsildár can superintend properly the affairs of a district containing one or two hundred villages. He cannot know with any tolerable certainty the quantity of land in cultivation, and must take it in a great measure upon the reports of the potails and curnums. I am therefore persuaded that there is a considerable amount of land in cultivation in Salem which is not brought to account, and that if kárkúns were employed, they would, by discovering it, repay their own expense ten times over, and be useful to the tahsildár in every part of his duty.

Decline of the condition of the people in the Ballári district. Causes of the decline.

In the Collectorate of Ballári, with the exception of three or four districts, the condition of the people, instead of improving during a long period of peace, has considerably declined within the last twenty years. This is to be ascribed to several causes. One was the rate of assessment, which, being framed from the customary ancient rates of the country, was calculated, not for an invariable lease, but for an annual settlement, in which allowance was always made for losses from bad crops or whatever cause. Another was the want of sufficient revenue experience at that time, which led the Government to adopt at once the survey assessment as the basis of the leases, instead of waiting until it should have been ascertained, by a trial of six or seven years, where and to what extent it was too high; for no assessment of the smallest district, and still less of a large province, can be depended upon until it has been corrected after such a trial. Another cause was the two leases of three and ten years, which, requiring the same amount to be paid in all years, did not make sufficient allowance for the inequality of the seasons, and whenever they were unfavourable, broke down many of the ryots; for, though the lease was made somewhat lower than the annual settlement, the abatement was not adequate to what was required by the change of system, because the advantage which an annual settlement derives from contracting or extending cultivation, and consequently of paying more or less revenue according to the nature of the season, is from ten to twenty per cent. in its favour, and a remission to this amount at least must be granted in a lease, in order

to place the two settlements upon an equal footing with regard to the facility of payment; and to these causes may be added another—the practice among the Collector's servants of endeavouring to make up the loss of revenue in the deteriorated villages which fell in before the expiration of the leases, by forcing upon the ryots more land than they could cultivate.

Reduction of assessment ordered by the Government. Neutralized by the action of the Collector.

In order to relieve the country and to stop the further decline of its resources, instructions were sent in September, 1820, to the Board of Revenue to reduce the assessment of Balláři twenty-five per cent., to take place from the commencement of the current Faslí year 1230. When the Collector's report on the settlement of that year was received, it appeared that he had not executed the orders he had received. He stated that he had granted the remission, but had induced those ryots who could afford it to cultivate a portion of waste land, but in no case exceeding one-half of the remission. The whole of this waste was said to be Rs. 86,185, but the amount, though probably not known to the Collector, was actually much more. I was much disappointed by this proceeding, but I trusted that Mr. C——s' known zeal and talents would soon remedy this error. In communicating, therefore, to the Board of Revenue the sentiments of Government on the settlement, the Collector's conduct was generally approved. But in the case of the waste, it was observed that 'the tendency of that measure is to defeat the object of the 'remission. The ryots are to be allowed to occupy waste 'land when they want it; but it is evident in this case that, 'though they are stated to have been willing to take it, yet 'it was not of their own seeking.' No doubt was entertained that the Collector, on learning the sentiments of Government, would hasten to carry them into effect; but he did not take a single step for the purpose, though all that he had to do might have been done in an instant by issuing a proclamation that the ryots were at liberty to throw up all the waste that had been imposed in lieu of the twenty-five per cent. remission. No settlement was made for Faslí 1231, excepting in that portion of the province whose leases expired in that year. In all the rest the settlement of 1230 was continued, apparently from a notion which he had adopted without inquiry, and which has no foundation in truth, that every

ryot in an extensive province can permanently cultivate and pay the rent of all the fields composing his putkutt or estate. In 1231 the waste was taken off some few ryots who complained, but on all the rest it was continued just as if no order had ever been issued by Government to the contrary, and waste was imposed in those villages whose leases expired in that year. In Faslí 1232 the former waste was continued, and in many places fresh waste imposed upon the ryots; and in Faslí 1233 I found, by inquiry on the spot, that the ryots were still burdened with it, and had little hope of being relieved from it. The tahsildárs for some years had imposed as much waste as they could. They do not appear to have thought it necessary to wait for orders, but to have considered the keeping up of the revenue by the waste as a part of the new system, which it was their duty to support.

His neglect of orders.

Few of the ryots ever complained of the waste to the Collector, because they, no doubt, imagined that it was continued by his authority. He undertook the labour of imposing it contrary to orders, but when directed to take it off, he did nothing. He could hardly have imagined that the ryots could have got rid of it without his orders, and he ought to have been as careful to see it removed as he had been to impose it.

Misconception as to the extent of the waste land included in the ryots' holdings.

The Collector does not seem ever to have had a correct idea of the extent of the waste. Long before I visited Ballári, I was convinced that it was greater than was reported, from the circumstance of the fall of revenue not having been in any degree proportionate to what it ought to have been, owing to the remission of twenty-five per cent; and after reaching the Ceded Districts, I found that it was greater than I had even suspected. The crowds of ryots who assembled every evening at my tent to complain of the waste, rather resembled a mob than an ordinary party of complainants. The pressure to be heard first was so great that it was not easy to hear any of them. It was clearly ascertained in numerous instances that the waste had not been limited to half the remission, but had been unequally distributed according to the supposed ability of the ryot, and that in many cases it equalled the whole, and in some instances exceeded the amount of the remission, so that the rent of the ryot was actually raised instead of being lowered by the measure. As far as I could

judge from the complaints of the ryots and such information as could be procured, the amount of waste could not be taken at much less than three lakhs of rupees, and the ryots have therefore, in the course of the last three years, paid from eight to ten lakhs to Government above the just demand. This sum, if it were practicable, ought to be restored, because its receipt was a breach of public faith. The restoration would be easy, if only two or three hundred ryots were concerned; but as there are probably not less than from ten to twenty thousand, it would be almost impossible at this late period to make it reach their hands, except partially and after a minute examination of the waste of three years.

Effects of the Collector's measures.

The effect of the Collector's measures has been to disappoint all the expectations which Government might have formed from the liberal remission granted to the people of the Ceded Districts. As they had in general suffered much by the leases, and as many of the principal men had been thrown into jail, and many ruined by lawsuits for rent, it was considered to be advisable, in order not only to restore the country to its former state, but to raise it to a more prosperous condition than it had ever before attained, to lower the assessment one-fourth. It was supposed that this great sacrifice would be only temporary, and that it would be gradually replaced by the extension of cultivation and trade from the increasing means of the inhabitants. But instead of our having seen the effect of a three years' trial of the reduced assessment upon the country, it is still to begin, and to begin under much greater difficulties than would have attended it when first ordered above three years ago. It is evident that, as a great part of the ryots have for some years been paying nearly as much, and some of them even more than the amount of the remission, they have derived no advantage from it. But this is not the whole of the evil; for as the ryots know that the remission was intended to be a real one, the exaction of its equivalent under another name excites great discontent, makes them pay it much more unwillingly than when it was included in the full assessment, and destroys all confidence between them and the Collector.

Necessity for his removal.

We cannot expect a very exact statement of the waste from the Collector, as we have had none for three years. We have no certainty that he will even now take off the whole, for

we can give him no orders more positive than were given in 1820 and repeated in 1821. By leaving him where he is, we put it in his power still to defeat the intentions of Government, as he has done for the last three years. We commit the character of Government by allowing the people to suppose that we are not dissatisfied with his conduct. There will never be any cordiality between him and them. The imposition of the waste will for a long time be the subject of numerous complaints, and it is not right that he should be the person to decide upon them, and on all these grounds it appears advisable that he should be removed. The circumstance which leaves me the least hope of any advantage from his continuance is, that in two years hardly any complaints should have been made to him regarding the imposition of waste land, while in a few days hundreds were made both to the second member of the Board of Revenue, by whom I was accompanied, and to myself.

It was my intention to have brought forward the present measure soon after my return from the Ceded Districts, but it was delayed from time to time in expectation of receiving the decision of the Supreme Government on the succession to Karnúl; because I was anxious that the Collector, who had displayed great judgment and energy in directing the troublesome affairs of the vacant chiefship, should have brought them to a final arrangement. As the difficult part of that duty has, however, been already performed, his presence is not any longer necessary. It is with great reluctance that I propose his removal, because he possesses great zeal and ability and indefatigable industry; but he may in other places be employed with more advantage to the public service than in the Ceded Districts.

The district of Cuddapah. Its more prosperous condition.

It is not necessary to say much about the Cuddapah division of the Ceded Districts, as the same remarks which have been made on Ballári are generally applicable to it. The Cuddapah ryots have suffered less from the lease than those of Ballári, because their lease settlement was originally more favourable and their remissions during its continuance were greater, and because the province of Cuddapah, when it first came into our hands, was more populous and wealthy than Ballári. In Cuddapah, therefore, notwithstanding the disadvantages of the lease, several of the districts have improved since its com-

mencement. This has happened chiefly in those districts where a great part of the ryots were too substantial and independent to submit to extra assessments. With such advantages it was to be expected that considerable improvements would be made in the course of fifteen years, though more would probably have been made, had they been left more free to adapt the extent of their cultivation and of their rents to the nature of the season. In most of the districts, though in various degrees, land has become a valuable property, partly from the long-continued operation of the fixed field assessment, and still more from the twenty-five per cent. remission.

The complaints of the ryots were, if possible, more numerous than in Ballári. They were chiefly on account of waste and of claims to land. The Cuddapah complaints were distinguished from those of Ballári by the great proportion of them which regarded claims to land. Every ryot who had been dispossessed of his land during the lease, or who had, from poverty or other cause, abandoned it, came to demand its restoration; and there can be little doubt but that the remission of twenty-five per cent. will have the beneficial effect of rendering land in a few years a valuable property throughout the Cuddapah district. The experiment, however, is still to begin there; for the Collector has not executed the orders of Government, but has in general either not granted the remission or imposed waste land on the ryots. The imposition of waste, however, has not been carried to so great an extent as in Ballári, as the Board of Revenue, having discovered that he was endeavouring in this way to make up for half of the twenty-five per cent. remission, ordered him to stop. He did stop, but he should have done more. He should have taken off the waste which had been imposed, but he had taken no steps for this purpose so late as October, when I was in the district. He was in consequence desired to issue a proclamation informing the ryots that they were to be relieved from it. But there is no probability that the proclamation will be effectual. His tahsildárs have been too long accustomed to a total relaxation of authority to pay any attention to it, and he is too indolent to enforce it.

The Collector's habitual neglect of orders has long since been repeatedly brought to the notice of Government by the Board of Revenue. To show to what a length it has been

carried, it is only necessary to specify the dates of some of his reports and of his answers to letters from the Board of Revenue.

[*Here follow particulars.*]

Injudicious treatment of the native officials.

One of the most objectionable parts of the Collector's conduct is his treatment of the native servants of every description. His tahsildárs and other principal servants, on whom the good management of the country chiefly depends, are capriciously suspended and kept for months and years without being charged with any fault, or even examined. Their duties are performed by substitutes taken from subordinate situations, who act upon their former low pay. Such a proceeding has the infallible effect of destroying all confidence and all exertion and emulation. It was observed by Government, in passing the Collector's estimates for Faslí 1229, that the places of no less than five tahsildárs were vacant, and explanation of the cause was required. The Board of Revenue called on the Collector for the required information on the 20th of December, 1821, but with little success; for on a matter on which they ought to have received immediate information, they were not enabled to report until the 19th of June, 1823, when they stated that what they had even then received was of a very unsatisfactory nature. The Board of Revenue noticed one remarkable case of a tahsildár who was suspended, without being informed of the cause, on the 14th of March, 1818, whose petition they forwarded for report to the Collector on the 30th of April, 1821, and to which they received no answer until the 14th May, 1823, above two years after its transmission. As nothing was proved against the tahsildár, his pay for nearly three years, which had been kept in deposit, amounting to Rs. 5266, was ordered to be discharged.

Disorder of the accounts.

The Collector, besides suspending the higher classes of servants, dismisses many of the inferior and keeps their places long vacant. The want of these men, whose aid is necessary in keeping the ordinary accounts; the practice of suspending servants, of having every man acting for another, and no one in his proper place, has introduced general confusion into every branch of the revenue, so that the accounts are in disorder, and many which are most useful, entirely neglected. It must long since have been evident to the Board from the reports of the Board of Revenue that the Collector is not calculated for his present office. But the reports of the Board of Revenue

convey but a faint idea of the disorder which prevails in the internal affairs of the Collectorate; and as there is no hope of amendment, but a certainty that the evil will increase daily while the present Collector remains in charge of the country, it appears to be an indispensable measure, in order to secure its future prosperity, that he be removed to a situation where less is left to discretion, and where less personal exertion is required.

Proposal to remove the Collector to a less responsible post.

ON THE DEPRESSED CONDITION OF THE BALLÁRI DISTRICT, CONSEQUENT ON THE TRIENNIAL AND DECENNIAL LEASES.

20th April, 1824.

Effect of the triennial and decennial leases on the agriculture of the Ballári district.

THE report of the Board of Revenue on the account given by the Collector of Ballári of his settlement of that district for Faslí 1232 explains very fully the causes of the decline of its agriculture during the last fifteen years. It shows that it has resulted chiefly from the operation of the triennial and decennial leases; that this system was unknown in the country, and was totally unsuited to the condition of its inhabitants; that the evil of its unbending nature, in exacting nearly the same revenue in all years, good or bad, was augmented by an assessment which, according to the custom of the country, was intended for annual settlements, and to receive remissions in unfavourable years, and was too high to be invariably realized in all seasons; and that the conclusions of the Collector are necessarily wrong, from being founded on statements which are full of errors.

The report is long, but this is rather an advantage, as it brings together everything that can be said in elucidation of the subject which it discusses. It will always be a valuable record for future reference, and it would alone have been sufficient to have set at rest the long agitated question between ryotwár and lease and village settlements, had this not already been done by the orders of the Honourable Court of Directors.

The report has so completely answered all the Collector's objections to the field assessment, that nothing beyond a few short observations is left for me to add.

Erroneousness of the Collector's

The Collector appears to have formed a system of his own, different from that which he was ordered to carry into effect.

This system, as far as can be gathered from his correspondence, was that each ryot should pay a fixed rent for the aggregate of his lands, without any regard to the details of a field assessment. He attempted to establish it very soon after his arrival in the Ceded Districts; for in Faslí 1230 he issued what he called permanent pottahs to the ryots, and, in consequence of this supposed permanency, made no settlement with them for 1231. He had seen no district but Ballári, and had had no experience in revenue details, and hence he seems to have thought that all abandonment of land was owing to field assessments. He does not seem to have known that the same abandonment took place in the Ceded Districts before any field assessment was made, and that the same thing still happens in all countries above the Gháts. A part of this abandonment no doubt arises from high assessment, but by far the greater part is owing to other causes. It is easy to perceive why it should be so. For this purpose it is only necessary to consider what was the general condition of the Ceded Districts in 1805. In that year, when their agriculture was more flourishing than at almost any former period, it was stated that one-fifth of the land revenue was drawn from poor ryots, scarcely any of whom ever paid the full rent; and that the land under the plough so far exceeded what could be adequately cultivated by the agricultural stock of the country, that if cultivation were left free, one-fourth of the land would be thrown up.

Views as to the results of field assessments.

Among the poor ryots, from whom one-fifth of the land revenue was raised, very few paid their full rent—most of them obtained a remission of from ten to fifty or sixty per cent.; but in so numerous a body, after every indulgence, many could not raise subsistence for themselves, far less pay rent. Many failed every year, and much land was in consequence thrown up. The same causes must have ever since produced the same effect. The proportion of poor ryots has certainly increased during the leases, and must have occasioned a greater abandonment and transfer of land than before.

Poverty of many of the ryots, a main cause of the abandonment of land.

It was intended that freedom of cultivation should be enjoyed under the lease system: wherever this freedom was obtained, one-fourth of the land would be thrown up on account of the inadequacy of agricultural stock. If we consider the extensive influence of these two causes, namely,

Inadequacy of agricultural stock, another main cause.

poor ryots and inadequacy of agricultural stock, on the abandonment of land, we shall not be surprised that so much has been thrown up, but rather that so much has been retained.

Over-assessment, another cause.

The assessment has also had a considerable share in the relinquishment of land, and, though in a much smaller degree than these two main causes, I am inclined to think that it has had more than is supposed by the Board of Revenue. When the high and low rated lands retained, bear the same proportion to each other as those thrown up, it is a sign that the relinquishment is not owing to the rate of the higher class. But when the high rated land relinquished, is in a greater proportion to that retained than the low, it is a proof that the assessment is too high, and this has happened in a considerable number of villages. The mischief which would naturally have resulted from the over-assessment in such villages, has, however, been augmented by the lease; because in a bad season, when the ryotwár settlement would have lessened the pressure of high rent by remission, the unbending nature of the lease exacted the full rent, and in proportion as it was high, its payment tended to break down the ryot, and, by diminishing his stock, to render him unable to cultivate the high rated land.

Omission to grant the usual cowle, another cause.

It should, however, be observed that in black land we are not to infer that when an extra proportion of the higher rated classes is thrown up, it is occasioned by the assessment. It may have been entirely owing to it, but it may also have been entirely owing to a different cause—the want of the usual cowle* for clearing the land of the long-rooted grass called nutt. All black land is liable to be overrun with this grass, and the richer the land the stronger the grass, and the more difficult its extirpation. In a large district many thousand acres are overrun in this way every year, but as many thousand are cleared by giving the land, according to the ancient custom of the country, upon a cowle or nominal quit-rent for five, six, or seven years. This cowle was continued under the ryotwár system, and by its means all nutt, as it sprung up, was cleared away. But under the lease this could not be done but within a very limited degree. A petty village renter could not afford to let a ryot employ twelve or fourteen bullocks for several

* *Cowle*—properly *kaul*—literally an agreement, means here a grant of land on favourable terms for a certain number of years.

years on land from which he himself was to get no rent for six or seven years, perhaps not within the term of his lease. His object was that the cattle should be employed on land which would give him rent immediately. He therefore refused the cowle, and the black land, being overrun with nutt, was abandoned.

Renewal of the cowle system and reduction of assessment.

The land will not now be thrown up from the want of cowle, as it will now be granted according to former usage; and the overassessment, wherever it does exist, will be either completely or at least so far removed by the twenty-five per cent. remission, as to leave no material obstacle to the future improvement of the country.

Evil effects of the tendency to adopt English models.

It is a great hindrance to the settlement of the country under the system of revenue in each province best known to the inhabitants, and best suited to their condition, that we are too apt to think that everything must be right in proportion as it is assimilated to the practice of England; that we are constantly bringing forward new projects for this purpose, and sometimes as new, what has been long known, and been given up from having been found on trial not to answer. The Collector of Ballári appears to regard the ryotwár settlement and field assessment as a new and erroneous system, and to think that another which he proposes, might have been, or might now be, substituted for it with advantage. He says that if the survey had stopped with the measurement, without assessing the fields, 'and a discretionary annual settlement had then been 'formed with each ryot for his entire farm, without assessing 'each field at different rates, the evil I have alluded to might 'perhaps have been avoided; and this subject seems deserving 'of the gravest consideration,' &c. The Collector here is evidently thinking of what is called the putkutt settlement, which he does not appear to know is only another name for the ryotwár. Both terms are indifferently applied in the provinces to the same settlement, though the local officers probably thought that one was sufficient for the purpose of explanation. The putkutt is the 'land held;' the ryot is the 'landholder.' Every ryot has always settled for his entire farm or putkutt, but this does not preclude the necessity of a field assessment, as supposed by the Collector. There was always in the Ceded Districts, long before they came into the possession of the Company, a field assessment or estimate of some

Collector's idea of dispensing with a field assessment altogether erroneous.

kind or other. There was in every village a register of the land, showing the rent of each field and its extent, either from actual measurements or estimates. Without such documents, though often extremely imperfect, no putkutt settlement could possibly have been made; for when a ryot either threw up two or three of the fields composing his putkutt, or took some additional, how was the decrease of rent in the one case and the increase in the other to have been determined without a knowledge of the assessment of such fields? If these points were to be determined by discretion, as recommended by the Collector, instead of by assessment accounts, we should do much mischief. We should never arrive at any fixed rent or settlement, and we should continue for ever going on in the dark, and acting in doubt. But the Collector appears to believe that this difficulty would be removed by competition, which forms a part of his system. He says, 'The natural competition for farms would, in 'time, point out their true value;' and 'the occupation of land 'in India might thus in time be regulated on a system similar 'to that in England.' This plan of the Collector is so contrary to everything that is right, that I am not sure whether I have not mistaken his meaning. If he mean by competition for farms, that the farm is to be given to the highest bidder, it could not be done without a general disregard of all the rights of property, without opening a wide field to fraud and corruption among the revenue servants, and without endless vexation and oppression. We already know what evil has resulted from competition in a few village leases; but the adoption of such a principle in the settlement of ryots' farms would produce general discontent, and excite endless village feuds, and, after all, it would involve us in more details than at present, without ever leading to any fixed assessment. The Collector looks upon the ryot as a mere tenant, and hence he infers that the occupation of land in India may be regulated as in England. But the station of the ryot is not so low as it is made by his plan. The ryot is certainly not like the landlord of England, but neither is he like the English tenant. If the name of landlord belongs to any person in India, it is to the ryot. He divides with Government all the rights of the land. Whatever is not reserved by Government belongs to him. He is not a tenant at will, or for a term of years. He is not removable because another offers more. The case, it is true, sometimes happens, but

His misapprehension of the true position of the ryot.

it is always regarded as one of injustice. He holds his land or putkutt, by inheritance, as long as he pays the public assessment upon it. That assessment has, under the native princes, always fluctuated, and been a great bar to improvement. It is our object to limit the demand upon his land, to secure him in the possession of it, and thus to render it a valuable property. But the proposed system of competition, instead of contributing to the attainment of this end, would take away all security, and not only prevent the growth of landed property, but shake and disturb all that now exists.

Inexpediency of any further revision of the assessment at the present time.

The Collector says that, notwithstanding the twenty-five per cent. reduction, a considerable quantity of land will still be too highly rated to admit of its being brought into cultivation. It was stated nearly twenty years ago that no survey could at once be made so accurate as not to require correction. This is the very course which ought now to be adopted for that purpose. A very large proportion of the land under cultivation during the leases paid the full survey rent; a considerable proportion had a remission, but very little of it beyond twenty-five per cent. There can therefore be no doubt that all the land which the ryots were able to hold throughout the leases, will now be easily and profitably held, after a reduction of twenty-five per cent. But as the land held during the leases was more than they could adequately cultivate, we must, for some years, expect rather a diminution than an extension of cultivation. When the stock of the ryots increases beyond what is sufficient for the due culture of their present lands, they will take more, and it will then be easily discovered by what they reject, what is actually overassessed. A revision should then be made, and a second and final remission be granted to all such land as may be found to be overassessed, which I do not believe will make altogether a difference of Rs. 20,000 on the present assessment of the whole Collectorate. But no revisions should be attempted for at least seven, or probably eight or ten years. In the mean time the assessment should not be touched in any instance, under any plea whatever. The mischief of tampering with the assessment is that it destroys all confidence in its permanence; that if indulgence is granted in one place, it is expected in another, and cannot be refused without occasioning discontent; and that, when once begun,

Objections to frequent revisions of the assessment.

it never stops. If, instead of twenty-five, we were to give up fifty per cent., it would not perceptibly diminish the calls of the ryots for remission, whenever they see that there is any chance of getting it. The facility with which they can obtain it, unless strictly prohibited, is exemplified in the cowles granted by the Sub-Collector, and recommended by the Collector, where it will be found that much land originally assessed as low as from one and a half to two and a quarter Cantarai fanams, or from one shilling to eighteenpence per acre, and afterwards reduced twenty-five per cent., was still thought too high, and all reduced to half a Cantarai fanam, or fourpence per acre.

Temporary abatements may be made in the case of poor ryots.

It has already been observed that a portion of the land-rent, amounting probably to one-fifth, is paid by poor ryots, many of whom never pay the full rent. These ryots should, according to ancient usage, have an abatement of rent for one, two, or three years, until they can pay the full rate, but no alteration of the assessment should be made on their account, for it never could be adapted to their circumstances without sacrificing the revenue altogether. We shall always have these ryots as long as there is unoccupied land, however flourishing the country may be. No reduction of rent will enable us to get rid of them, for their existence is not connected with the assessment, but is inherent in the state of society and the customs of the country. They are chiefly composed of the sons of petty ryots, and of industrious labourers, struggling with small and often inadequate means to become independent ryots. Many of them fail, but more are successful; and they not only fill up the vacancies constantly occurring among the old ryots from various accidents and calamities, but augment progressively the great body of the more substantial ryots, on whom the security of the revenue chiefly depends.

ON THE STATE OF THE COUNTRY AND THE CONDITION OF THE PEOPLE.

31st December, 1824.

Inadequacy of our experience to enable us to determine the mode of administration best adapted to India.

WE are now masters of a very extensive empire, and we should endeavour to secure and improve it by a good internal administration. Our experience is too short to judge what rules are best calculated for this purpose. It is only within the last thirty years that we have here begun to acquire any practical knowledge; a longer period must probably elapse before we can ascertain what is best. Such a period is as nothing in the existence of a people; but we act as if this were as limited as the life of an individual.

Precipitancy of some of our measures.

We proceed, in a country of which we know little or nothing, as if we knew everything, and as if everything must be done now, and nothing could be done hereafter. We feel our ignorance of Indian revenue, and the difficulties arising from it; and instead of seeking to remedy it by acquiring more knowledge, we endeavour to get rid of the difficulty by precipitately making permanent settlements which relieve us from the troublesome task of minute or accurate investigation, and which are better adapted to perpetuate our ignorance, than to protect the people.

Importance of a thorough knowledge of indigenous institutions, and especially of the system of land tenures and assessments.

We must not be led away by fanciful theories founded on European models, which will inevitably end in disappointment. We must not too hastily declare any rights permanent, lest we give to one class what belongs to another. We must proceed patiently, and, as our knowledge of the manners and customs of the people and the nature and resources of the country increases, frame gradually from the existing institutions such a system as may advance the prosperity of the country, and be satisfactory to the people. The knowledge

most necessary for this end is that of the landed property and its assessment; for the land is not only the great source of the public revenue, but on its fair and moderate assessment depend the comfort and happiness of the people.

Extent to which private property in land existed. Varied in different parts of the country.

Opinions respecting the ancient state of landed property in India are various, in consequence of our ignorance of it. The knowledge of it, however, is only useful, in so far as it may serve to throw light on its present state, and to aid us in finding the way for improving it. There is no reason to suppose that private landed property ever, at any one time, existed upon the same footing over the greater part of India. From Pulicat to Ganjam, in the Ceded Districts, the Baramahal and Coimbatore, it seems to have been always, as now, little known, except as inám from the sovereign. Along the Malabar coast, and above the Western Gháts from Súnda to Wainád, it seems to have existed from a remote period as now almost universally, and in the Carnatic, Tanjore, and Madura. In all these provinces it is important to recollect that, when they first fell under the British dominion, the land, whether private property or sirkár, was held in small portions by a great body of petty owners immediately of the princes, the poligárs of the south. The modern zemindárs of the Northern Sirkárs, whom the Company allowed to retain the districts which they had rented or managed under their native sovereign, and the old hill Rájás of that country, form no exception, as they were in fact petty princes, in whose districts the land was in the hands of small occupants, as in those of the Sirkárs. Unless we know in what manner the land of a province is occupied, we can form no just opinion as to how its internal administration should be regulated. In the Carnatic and the southern provinces, where the mirás, or private landed property, as described by Mr. Ellis, prevails, the land, as in other provinces, is distributed in small properties of from five or ten acres to one or two thousand acres.

The mirási system.

It may be proper to inquire a little into the mirási system of the Carnatic, in order to ascertain whether it possesses any such inherent advantages as should render it desirable to uphold the common tenure, where it still exists; or whether the change of common into separate tenure, which has been going on from a period beyond our knowledge, is not rather an improvement which ought to be encouraged.

The Board of Revenue seem to have considered mirásidárs of the village as the persons to whom the lands of the village were granted on its original settlement. They say that on the original establishment of every Tamil village, the hereditary right to all the lands was vested in all the occupants. They speak of this original settlement as a thing that was positively certain. But all this is assumed, without the least proof, and is altogether incredible. The account given by Mr. Ellis is not more satisfactory. He supposes that the Carnatic was chiefly a forest, until Adála Chakravarti, sovereign of Canara, whose capital was Vanavási, settled three hundred thousand colonists, of whom one-fifth were vellálas, in Tondamandalam. This is evidently fabulous. No prince ever planted such a colony; no country could have supplied the drain. The number of deaths from casualties in such an undertaking would have been as great as that of the surviving colonists. New settlers brought from Canara and Vanavási would die very fast in the Carnatic even now, when it is cleared. We are not told how three hundred thousand colonists were to maintain themselves among jungles to be cleared away, when we know that even at this day such a population could not be maintained without the aid of numerous tanks and watercourses for the cultivation of the lands, which would be otherwise very unproductive.

Untrustworthy accounts given of its origin.

It is much more likely that the mirási tenure, with all its incidents as described by Mr. Ellis, was the gradual growth of a country long peopled and cultivated, than that it was created at once by a grant to a particular tribe of Hindu cultivators (vellalás), on their first settling in Arcot, and that province was then an uncultivated forest. It probably originated in local circumstances, and perhaps more in the great number of tanks and watercourses constructed at the public expense, than in any other. As the sirkár could be reimbursed for the expenditure on these works only by the regular cultivation of the lands for which he had provided water, he might have thought it advisable to grant the occupants certain privileges, to enable them to keep up the cultivation as high as possible. A moderate rent and an hereditary right in the soil were two of the most obvious means of effecting the object. The joint or sámudayam tenure, by which all the mirásidars hold all the lands of the village in common, interchangeable at stated periods, probably arose out of the same view of keeping up

The growth of the system was probably gradual,

and connected with the system of irrigation at the public expense.

the cultivation; for, as in unfavourable seasons a portion of the lands could not be fully watered, it is evident that the mirásidárs who held this land, unless there were a periodical interchange, would be worse off, and less able than the others to pay their rent regularly.

Distinction between the wet lands in Malabar and Arcot.

The great distinction between the wet lands of Malabar and Arcot is, that in Malabar the cultivation of them depends entirely on the falling rains; while in Arcot it depends chiefly on tanks and other artificial sources of irrigation, constructed at the expense of Government. In Malabar, the cultivator of wet lands is not at all dependent on the aid of Government; in Arcot he can do nothing without it. In Malabar, therefore, the cultivator trusts to the seasons and to his own industry for success, and he can with confidence venture to employ all his savings in the improvement of his land. As Government furnishes him with no water and bears no share of the expense of the improvements, it has no fair claim to any additional rent on account of it, and has, in fact, not made it to any great extent; and hence he has been enabled to render his land a valuable private property, saleable at all times, and transferable at will. In Arcot the nature of mirási hereditary landed property is very different, and is much less perfect; because, being dependent on the Government for its supply of water, and being, in fact, held in partnership with the Government, it does not hold out the same inducement to undertake improvement; and hence the land in general is but indifferently cultivated, and, though it is nominally saleable, it will seldom fetch any price in the market. In Malabar, where the falling rain during five or six months supplies all the water of cultivation, the proprietor can lay out his money with safety on the land; for he knows that he cannot be disappointed while the order of the seasons continues as it is. But in Arcot the proprietor has no such certainty: he is not even sure that he can keep his lands in their present condition, for unless Government keep the tanks in repair, this cannot be done. It may often happen that he cannot improve without a larger supply of water, and that this cannot be obtained without enlarging the tank or watercourse, which Government may think too expensive; and it may sometimes happen that the bursting of the tank may render his land for ever unfit for cultivation, because the tank may be allowed to go to decay, from its being found that the

revenue of all the land watered by it would not defray the expense of repairing it. There are tanks in the country whose lands would not yield five or even four per cent. on the cost of the necessary repairs.

Where the Government provides the means of irrigation, it is entitled to a larger share of the produce of the land than when it does not.

The native chiefs were fond of building tanks as good works, or as the means of transmitting their names to posterity; and as they frequently erected them at an expense far beyond what the land could yield any adequate return for, when they were broken down by floods, their successors did not always think it advisable to repair them; and hence the land formerly watered by them was necessarily either left waste or cultivated with dry grain, not yielding more than from one-fifth to one-tenth of the rice crop. In many parts of Arcot the soil is so poor and sandy, that it will not pay the expense of cultivation unless it be watered. It is evident, therefore, that when Government provides the water, which is the principal part of the expense of cultivation, it becomes a partner with the owner, and has a claim upon him for a fair return for this expense, and that he can never have the same share of the produce as the owner of rice land in Malabar, who bears himself the whole expense of cultivation. From these causes it happens that in Arcot, and still more in districts where the soil is richer, the most substantial ryots are found engaged, not in the cultivation of the wet land, where Government supplies the water, but in that of dry, where they can improve without the help of Government, and derive the exclusive benefit of every improvement.

Erroneousness of the theory that the mirásidár can keep his land uncultivated and at the same time be free from liability for the assessment.

It has been maintained by some that in Arcot and other Tamil countries, the mirásidár of wet land is bound to pay rent only for what he does cultivate; that if he leave it all uncultivated, Government has no demand on him for rent; and that if Government send another person to cultivate this land, the mirásidár has a right to exact from this person the landlord's share or rent. If such a right existed anywhere, we might have expected to find it in Malabar and Canara, where private landed property is more perfect than in Arcot, and where Government bears no part of the expense of cultivation. But in those provinces there is no such right, and the landlord is liable for the whole fixed rent of his land whether he cultivate it or not; and if he fail to pay his rent, his property is liable to distraint and his land to be sold. There does not

seem to be any proof of the existence of such a right in Arcot. The belief of it appears to have arisen from confounding the tenant of the mirásidár with that of the Government. The mirásidár may undoubtedly make such terms as he pleases with his own tenant; but when he can neither cultivate the land himself nor find a tenant, and Government provides one, he has no claim for rent upon this tenant of Government.

Failure to pay the assessment in all countries renders the land liable to be sold.

It may at first sight appear to be hard that he should not be entitled to rent for his own land; but it is to be recollected that he has failed to pay the assessment, and that in such cases the land of the proprietor is in other countries, as well as in this, liable to sale, and that the mirásidár has still the privilege for a long, though not clearly defined, term of years, of recovering his land from the Government tenant and consenting to pay the rent.

Right of the mirásidár to rent from land for which he neither pays revenue nor finds a tenant, untenable.

The right of the mirásidár to derive a rent from land for which he neither pays the public revenue nor finds a tenant, is certainly not acknowledged now, and probably never was so at any former time. Government by the construction of tanks and watercourses at Arcot supplies the water, which is the chief article in the expense of wet cultivation, and has a right to see that the lands on account of which it has incurred such a heavy charge, are not without necessity left uncultivated, or exempted from their share of the public burdens.

Reasons for this view.

In many parts of Arcot, as has been already remarked, the soil is so poor that, previously to its being watered and converted into rice land, it would not have defrayed the expense of cultivation, and must have lain waste.

In general the produce of wet is to that of dry land as five to one, at least; if, therefore, we suppose that certain mirásidárs possessed a piece of land which under dry cultivation yielded two thousand rupees of annual revenue to Government, it would, after being converted into wet or rice land, yield ten thousand rupees; but the tank which would be required in order to supply the water, would probably cost Government a lakh of rupees. The additional revenue, therefore, which Government would derive from work would be eight thousand rupees per annum, which, making allowance for occasional repairs, would not be more than five or six per cent. for its money; and it would be much less, if we suppose that the

mirásidárs, when they did not choose to cultivate, were not liable for the revenue. It is therefore reasonable to conclude that Government, where it sunk so large a capital, would expect an adequate return; and as this could only be obtained by the regular payment of the revenue, it would not grant to the mirásidárs a privilege which would defeat this object, but would follow the custom which we find at present established, of transferring the land to other tenants when they failed to pay the rent.

If the mirásidárs, without cultivating themselves or finding tenants to cultivate, had been allowed to levy from the Government tenants a swámibhogham, or landlord's share, of ten to fifteen per cent. they would, without any liability for the public revenue, and without any expense, have derived, by means of a tank constructed at the sole charge of Government, an income from the land four or five times greater than before. No private person would make a tank on such terms; and while there is no proof to the contrary, we cannot suppose that any Government would have done so either.

Practice in the Deccan opposed to the alleged claim of mirásidárs.

It appears from the reports concerning the Poona territories, that the mirásidár of the Deccan, where mirás exists, is answerable for the revenue, whether the land be cultivated or fallow; that if he decline to cultivate or pay his rent, he may be compelled to give in a written deed of renunciation; that the right of Government to dispose of the land after a long absence of the mirásidár is not disputed; that the mirásidár gets back his land when his absence has not been long, and when it has been given in temporary lease to another person, but not after a long absence and its having been granted in mirás to another; and that, though he is supposed to have a right, even for a century, to reclaim his land, usage does not allow so long a period. These rules differ very little from those of Malabar and Canara respecting private landed property; and if ever it was the custom to exempt the mirásidár of Arcot from rent when he left his land uncultivated, it was a custom different both from that of other provinces, and from that which has long prevailed in Arcot itself. There is one case, and a very common one in Arcot, in which no demand can be made upon the mirásidár when the land is left uncultivated; it is when it cannot be cultivated in consequence of a want of water.

Claim of mirásidárs to a proprietary right in waste land denied.

The waste in mirás villages in Arcot is supposed by Mr. Ellis to belong to the mirásidárs jointly; and he supports his opinion by documents, showing that when a mirásidár sells his cultivated lands, he transfers by the same deed to the purchaser his right in the produce of the waste, the quarries, mines, fisheries, &c., within the limits of the village. But this appears to be a mere technical form, which can give no actual proprietary right in the waste. It is used in villages where there is no waste, as well as where there is, and may be used where there is no mirás. It confers a right, but not the right of ownership, to the pasture of the waste lands and the fishery of the tanks and nullahs, in common with the other mirásidárs of the village. The same right exists everywhere. In those parts of the Deccan where mirás is unknown, the ryots of every village reserve the fishery and pasture to themselves, and drive away the cattle of strangers, and derive just as much benefit from the waste as those of mirás villages. Such a right seems to be a natural one everywhere, and it is accordingly assumed by the ryots of every village, without its being supposed that any formal grant is necessary for the purpose. Mr. Ellis does not appear to be very decided as to the nature of the property enjoyed by the mirásidár in waste. He admits that he cannot break it up without the permission of the sirkár. He does not say that he has any specific share of it, or that he can sell it alone without the cultivated lands, or that he can do more than sell with his arable his right of common in the waste. The sirkár from ancient times has everywhere, even in Arcot, as well as in other provinces, granted waste in inám, free of every rent or claim, public or private, and appears in all such grants to have considered the waste as being exclusively its own property. It may be objected that if this were the case, it might give away the whole waste lands of a village, and injure the inhabitants by depriving them of their pastures. It certainly might give away the whole; but whether the exercise of this right would be injurious to the inhabitants, would depend on circumstances. If the lands, according to the general custom of the country, were left unenclosed, there would be no injury, as the cattle of the village would graze on them whenever the crops were off the ground. If the lands were enclosed, the inhabitants would be no worse off than those of many other villages

whose lands are entirely cultivated and enclosed, and who are, in consequence, often obliged to send their cattle during the dry season to graze in distant jungles, and to incur a trifling expense for the wages of the herdsmen and the tax on pasturage. This expense, even where greatest, could never have affected the right of the sirkár to dispose of the waste, though it might probably have induced it to compensate the mirásidár inhabitants for their loss by some reduction in the assessment of their arable lands.

The right of the Government in waste land is absolute.

It has been supposed that in mirás villages in Arcot, in the original compact between the sirkár and the first settlers, the exclusive use of the waste was secured to those settlers; but it has already been shown that in all villages, whether mirás or not, the inhabitants reserve to themselves the exclusive use of the waste. But this right is good only against strangers, not against the sirkár, which possesses, I think, by the usages of the country, the absolute right of disposing of the waste as it pleases in villages which are mirás, as well as in those which are not. In the Deccan, in mirás villages, the corporation has not the right of disposing of unoccupied land, but the sirkár has. All the lands of Arcot were at one time held, according to Mr. Ellis, under the joint, or samudáyam tenure. This tenure has been much praised by some revenue authorities, and its breaking up into the separate individual, or palabhogam tenure, has been regarded as a calamity to the country. The happy state of the natives in the joint tenure villages is not supported by the fact of most of them having long since adopted the separate tenure.

Reasons for the change from a joint to a separate tenure of land.

When this change took place, is not exactly known; but it was probably the gradual work of time, long before the Company's Government. It appears in some places to have occurred at a very early period; for in many villages, but especially in those south of the Coleroon, the mirásidárs, instead of dividing the cultivated lands periodically, according to the share held by each, appear, after having once divided them in that manner, to have declared the division permanent. Such a change is the natural course of things, and must always precede every material improvement, and is only restrained from becoming general by overassessment, or by difficulties regarding water. If one part of the lands of a village has advantages over the other in these respects, the common tenure

will be acceptable to the proprietors, by giving to all in their turn the benefit of the favoured land; but where the advantages of the several lots of land are nearly equal, the occupants will in general wish to keep their own permanently, because no man ever labours with the same spirit to improve what he is to share with another, as what he is to retain exclusively for himself. The common tenure has existed in many nations, but usually in the rude and early stages of agriculture, and has always, I believe, been considered as hostile to improvement. I do not know that there is any cause to suppose that its effect has not been the same in India as in other countries, for the same substantial ryots are seldom found in villages where this tenure exists, as in those where the individual tenure prevails. The common tenure is well suited to a country whose mirásidár ryots are poor, and whose Government looks always to its present wants, and little to futurity; because, as the village community is bound to make good all deficiencies of its members, and to cultivate and pay the rent of all the arable land for which there is water, Government by this means draws as much revenue from the country as is possible under its then actual condition.

The common tenure adapted to a rude state of agriculture,

and to a country where the ryots are poor and the Government looks more to its immediate wants than to the future.

The system of paying in kind a share of the produce as the Government rent, is also well adapted to the same state of things, because Government is always sure of obtaining half of the produce, or whatever its share may be, from the ryot, whether the crop be scanty or abundant, and because the ryot is also sure of not being called on for rent, when the crop has entirely failed, and he is, perhaps, unable to pay. Such a system is better calculated to save the ryot from being oppressed by demands which he cannot pay, than to enable him to become wealthy.

The system of paying revenue in kind adapted to the same state of things.

This protection to the ryot from the payment of revenue in a season of calamity, is the only advantage which appears to belong to the system; but it is an advantage which could be necessary only under a rigid system, and would not be wanted under a more liberal one of assessment. The very existence of such a system in Arcot, and other districts where it is prevalent, is a proof that, however light Indian revenue may be in the theories of Indian writers, in practice it has always been heavy. Had the public assessment, as pretended, ever been, as in the books of their sages, only a sixth or a fifth, or even

The existence of such a system is proof that Indian revenue has always been heavy.

only a fourth of the gross produce, the payment of a fixed share in kind, and all the expensive machinery requisite for its supervision, never could have been wanted. The simple plan of a money assessment might have been at once resorted to, in the full confidence that the revenue would every year, in good or bad seasons, be easily and punctually paid. No person who knows anything of Indian revenue can believe that the ryot, if his fixed assessment were only a fifth or a fourth of the gross produce, would not every year, whether good or bad, pay it without difficulty, and not only do this, but prosper under it, beyond what he has ever done at any former period. Had such a moderate assessment ever been established, it would undoubtedly have been paid in money, because there would have been no reason for continuing the expensive process of making collections in kind. It was because the assessment was not moderate, that assessments in kind were introduced or continued; for a money rent equivalent to the amount could not have been realized one year with another. The Hindu Governments seem to have often wished that land should be both an hereditary and a saleable property; but they could not bring themselves to adopt the only practicable mode of effecting it, a low assessment. It is, however, supposed by the Board of Revenue that it was low. The simple fact of its being paid in kind, is sufficient, were there nothing else, to disprove this opinion. The Board says that the Mahomedan exactions converted the Hindu tax into a land-rent, reduced the landlord to a land occupant who ceased to employ tenants, and restricted himself to such land as he could cultivate with his own servants, and then Government transferred the vacant land to strangers temporarily, and more often permanently. But there is no proof whatever of this former state of light assessment, of the time when it existed, or when the change began, or when it reached its present standard. It is somewhat singular that the Board of Revenue, though they consider a light assessment and the payment in kind of a fixed share of the crops as fundamental parts of the old Indian revenue system, yet in their conjectures as to the origin of the custom of the revenue of wet land being demandable in kind, they never once think of ascribing it to any cause tending to favour the ryot, but only to those causes which tend to secure a high revenue. They say the fluctuation in

the produce, in the value of the produce, the desire to obtain the utmost possible revenue in times of high price, a knowledge of the fluctuation in the value of the precious metals, and the impossibility of otherwise obtaining so large a proportion of the gross produce as fifty per cent., may all or in part have perpetuated the custom of receiving in kind the revenue demandable from rice land. I never could discover the least foundation for the assumption that the Hindu assessment had been raised by the Mahomedan conquest, or for believing that the assessment which we now find, did not exist before that period. We find the assessment as high in the territories of Hindu as of Mahomedan chiefs. This cannot have been owing to the progress of the Mahomedan arms, because over many of the petty states they never established more than a nominal dominion, nor ever assumed the management of their revenues. Among the chieftains of the Northern Sirkárs, descended from the ancient sovereigns of Orissa, and who have for ages been in a great measure independent, as well as among many of the Rájás of the Upper and Lower Carnatic descended from the sovereigns of Vijayanagar or their deputies, and who also, since the fall of that empire, have in a great degree been independent, we find the same rate of assessment, amounting usually to about one-half, and fluctuating, according to the soil, from two-fifths to three-fifths of the gross produce, with little variation, except that in some places it is paid in kind, and in others in money. It cannot be maintained that the demands of the Mahomedan conquerors may have compelled these chiefs to introduce a new and higher rate of assessment; because the peshcash imposed upon them by the Mahomedans was trifling, was often withheld, and was generally less than they had paid to their own princes. The few imperfect records which have reached us of the revenues of Vijayanagar, the last of the great Hindu powers, do not show that the assessment was lighter under that Government than under its Mahomedan successors. If, then, there ever did in any age prevail throughout India a moderate land-tax, its loss must be attributed to some other cause than that of Mahomedan invasion. After the time of the first fanatical conquerors, many of the Mahomedan princes seem to have been more enlightened, and as much disposed to be moderate as the former Hindu rulers; among these were the Emperor Akbár and other

No proof that the assessment was lighter under the Hindu than under the Mahomedan Governments.

princes, by whom great and systematic reforms were introduced. There is, however, no ground, either from tradition or from record, or from the present state of the country, for believing that a moderate land-tax was ever at any time throughout India the general principle of its revenue system. It is much more likely that a variety of systems have always prevailed in different provinces at the same time, some more, some less favourable to the people, some admitting of private landed property, some rejecting it; that in the same province different systems have predominated at different times; and that the system of all land being the property of the sirkár, has sometimes succeeded that of private landed property, and sometimes given way to it. At Vijayanagar, the seat of the last great Hindu Government, and in the countries immediately around it, where, according to the theory of private landed property having been the ancient Hindu system until destroyed by foreign invasion, we might naturally hope to see it in its greatest perfection, we find no trace or record of its having ever existed. In the countries in the peninsula, it is most perfect in Canara, which was long, and in Malabar, which was a considerable time, under a Mahomedan Government. Next to these provinces, it is most complete in Travancore, which never was subdued by that power. In Arcot and Tanjore it is less valuable than in Travancore, and in Madura and Tinnevelly still less so than in Arcot. In a narrow strip of country along the eastern side of the Western Gháts, from the south of Mysore to Sattára, it is found nearly in the same state as in the adjoining districts below the Gháts. With the exception of this narrow strip, it is unknown in Mysore, in the southern Mahratta country, in the Ceded Districts, and in the Northern Sirkárs. It is unknown in Bijapur; it is found further north, at Sholapur, on the same footing as at Sattara, but again disappears to the eastward, on the Nizam's frontier. In Sattára the proportion of mirásidárs to other occupants of the land is two to one; in Poonah, three to one; and in Ahmednagar, about equal. In Khandésh there are very few mirásidárs, and it is thought by the Collector, Captain Briggs, that mirás has generally ceased in that province since its conquest by the Mahomedans in 1306.

No trace of private property in land at Vijayanagar. Countries in which it existed.

But Mr. Chaplin thinks that there is no proof that it

existed antecedent to the Mahomedan conquest. The mirás system was established in Ahmednagar about the year 1600, by Malik Ambar, the Mahomedan ruler of that province; and in some other provinces where it is found, and which were long under the Mahomedan dominion, it is uncertain whether it is of Hindu or Mussulman origin. It is, no doubt, possible that private landed property may in some countries have been swept away by the violence of Mahomedan invasion, and the long continuance of oppressive government; but it is equally possible that the same thing may have been produced long before the Mahomedan conquest, by the wars among the Hindus themselves, and by the subversion of one great Hindu empire by another; and it is probable that enlightened princes, both Hindu and Mahomedan, seeking the welfare of their subjects, may have either revived or introduced private landed property into their dominions.

The origin of mirás a question of less importance than that of a moderate assessment.

But the question regarding mirás is one rather of curiosity than of utility; for in most districts the mirás is worth little, and has no value that might not be easily given to the lands in every province by a moderate reduction in the assessment. It is much more important to ascertain how this moderate assessment is to be gradually introduced, and private landed property reared upon it, than to seek to trace the origin and fluctuations of mirás. It is only on the Malabar coast that the mirás yields such a landlord's rent as to make it saleable. In Arcot it yields little landlord's rent, and, though nominally saleable, can seldom be sold. In the southern provinces it gives hardly any landlord's rent; and in the Deccan the assessment is usually so high as to leave little or none, and the land, when thrown up by the mirásidár, can seldom pay the old rent, because the uncertain tenure of the cultivator prevents his bestowing the same labour on it. It may therefore be assumed that, except in a few districts, mirás land yields no landlord's rent.

In order to make the land saleable, the assessment ought to be fixed and moderate in amount.

But this does not hinder it from being a desirable property; for, as a man cannot always find employment for his labour and stock, it is of great importance to possess land by which this employment may be secured. In sirkár land, as well as mirás, ryots sometimes have a landlord's rent; for it is evident that whenever they so far improve their land as to derive from it more than ordinary profit of stock, the excess is

landlord's rent; but they are never sure of enjoying this advantage, as they are constantly liable to be deprived of it by injudicious overassessment. While this state of insecurity exists, no body of substantial landholders can ever arise; nor can the country improve, or the revenue rest on any solid foundation. In order to make the land generally saleable, to encourage the ryots to improve it, and to regard it as permanent hereditary property, the assessment must be fixed, and more moderate in general than it now is; and, above all, so clearly defined as not to be liable to increase from ignorance or caprice.

This can only be effected by imposing upon each field a money assessment moderate in amount and accurately registered.

This cannot be attained by receiving as revenue a specific share of the produce in kind, because it is exposed to fluctuation from fraud and many other causes, and because the usual share would be too heavy a tax on improvement; or by a money rent, fixed according to the custom of the country, because, though nominally fixed, it is nowhere registered or accurately known, but it is merely understood to be so much, or about so much. It can be attained only by a moderate money assessment, fixed specifically on every separate field or piece of land, and accurately registered in the accounts of every village curnum and of every Collector. This is, in fact, no new system, but it is merely giving a more accurate form to the system of money rents followed by the natives, where such rents prevailed. There can be no doubt that this system is perfectly adequate to the accomplishment of every object of improvement for which it is intended. All doubt that might have existed on this subject ought to be removed by what has happened in Baramahal. It was supposed that, soon after the introduction of the permanent assessment into that province, the survey rates of assessment, which had been previously established by Colonel Read, were entirely abandoned between the múttadárs, or newly constituted proprietors, and the ryots; but this is so far from being the case, that the survey assessment was always considered by the ryots as their great landmark, and it was it alone which, by providing them with a clearly defined standard and maximum of rent, enabled them, when withdrawn from the protection of the Collector, and left to that of the múttadárs and the Courts of Justice, to which they were too poor to appeal, to undergo the experiment of such a system for nearly twenty years, and to revert from

It has been done in the Baramahal.

the múttadár to Government with much less loss than could have been expected, and, in some instances, in a much better condition than they had ever been before. In a considerable part of the land, the múttadárs found it advisable to lower the survey assessment, in order to induce the ryots to extend their cultivation,—in some cases they raised it illegally, by the aid of the influence derived from their situation; but in by far the greater part of the land, the survey assessment still continued to be followed in the engagements between the múttadár and the ryots. This long continuance of a known and fixed assessment has begun to introduce saleable private landed property into the Baramahal, where it was never known before. I do not speak of muttas or zemindáries, because they are merely saleable portions of the Government revenue, but of the single field, or aggregate of fields, which usually compose the possession of a ryot. In many múttas several fields are saleable, and in some every field is so. This effect has been produced by the survey assessment, not from its moderation—for it is hardly lighter than that of the native Governments usually is—but from its having been fixed, and so clearly defined as to leave no uncertainty, and thus to encourage one party to improve and the other to purchase the land.

Has there introduced saleable private property in land.

This effect, too, has been produced under many disadvantages, and it would have been much more extensive, had it been assisted by a lighter assessment, and not been impeded by the petty oppression of the múttadári system. The land which has become saleable in the Baramahal, has been sold at from two or three to ten or twelve years' purchase. This is an advantage which it possesses over the old mirás land of Arcot, which, though nominally saleable, is rarely so, except in the neighbourhood of Madras, or of towns on the coast, and there more commonly for building than for agricultural purposes. It possesses a great advantage in its simplicity; for it is not a complicated property, made up of various shares and fees, and bound to pay Government a large share of every improvement, like that of the mirás; but it is a fee simple, held immediately of Government, and liable only to the same fixed rent, however great the produce derived from improvement may be. The land of the Baramahal will probably in time all become saleable, even under its present assessment. But private landed property is of slow growth in countries where it has not pre-

Effected under many disadvantages.

viously existed, and where the Government revenue is nearly half the produce; and we must not expect that it can be hastened by regulations or forms of settlement, or any other way than by adhering steadily to a limited assessment, and lowering it wherever, after full experience, it may still in particular places be found too high. By pursuing this course, or, in other words, by following what is now called the ryotwári system, we shall see no sudden change or improvement. The progress of landed property will be slow, but we may look with confidence to its ultimate and general establishment. We have never yet followed with perseverance any plan calculated to create or extend private landed property, and where we have laid the foundation of such a plan by a survey and fixed assessment of the land, as in the Baramahal, Coimbatore, and Arcot, and some other provinces, we have counteracted its design by injudicious leases and permanent settlements.

The zemindári and village lease systems attributable to ignorance of the state of landed property in the country.

These settlements seem to have been adopted in deference to the example of Bengal, without sufficient knowledge of the claims of the ryots. The rights of the mirásidár ryots of Arcot and Tanjore were well known at the time, but those of the ryots of other districts which were equally strong, though not called mirási, seem to have been little understood. Most of the well-intentioned, but visionary, plans for the improvement of India by the creation of zemindárs of whole districts, or of simple villages, appear to have originated in extreme ignorance of the state of the landed property of the country and the rights of the persons by whom it was held. It has been supposed by some that the zemindárs were the landlords or proprietors, and the ryots their under-tenants or labourers, and by cthers that the sovereign was the sole landlord, and the ryots were cultivating tenants. But the ryot is the real proprietor, for whatever land does not belong to the sovereign, belongs to him. The demand for public revenue, according as it is high or low in different places and at different times, affects his share; but whether it leaves him only the bare profit of his stock, or a small surplus beyond it as landlord's rent, he is still the true proprietor, and possesses all that is not claimed by the sovereign as revenue.

Great subdivision of land in Madras. Reasons for it.

The land in most of the provinces under the Madras Government is occupied by a vast mass of small proprietors or ryots, holding properties of every size, from two or three to two

or three thousand acres, and some few having whole villages. These properties are in general very small, but they are of that extent which necessarily results from the limited means of the owners, and the nature of the institutions of the country. The correctness of this description is not altered by the existence of great possessions in the hands of Rájás and old zemindárs in some of our provinces; because these men are not private landholders, but rather petty princes, and the ryots in their districts stand nearly in the same relation to them as to the sovereign in the sirkár districts. The distribution of landed property differs in every country: it is different in Ireland from what it is in England, and in India from what it is in other countries. But we ought to take it as we find it, and not attempt, upon idle notions of improvement, to force a distribution of it into larger properties, when every local circumstance is adverse to its continuance in that state. The experiment has already been tried by the establishing of village zemindárs or múttadárs, and has already very generally failed. The event could not possibly have been otherwise, of a measure whose object was to bring a new class of proprietors into villages where the produce was too little for the old ones. Even in those villages which are still in the hands of the múttadárs, the object of having larger landed properties will entirely fail, because the properties, by sale and division among heirs, are fast subdividing, and will soon dwindle into portions smaller than the properties of individual ryots. There are instances in which this has already happened, and they will soon become so numerous, that the system must at no distant period die a natural death.

The village zemindár or múttadár in India cannot be compared with an English landlord.

There is no analogy whatever between the landlord of England and his tenants and the múttadár, or new village zemindár of this country, and his ryots. In England, the landlord is respected by the farmer as his superior: here the zemindár has no such respect, for the principal ryots of most villages regard him as not more than their equal, and often as their inferior. He is often the former potail or head ryot of the village, but he is frequently some petty shopkeeper or merchant, or some adventurer or public servant out of employ. Whichever of these he is, he has usually very little property; he has none for the improvement of the village, but, on the contrary, looks to the village as the means of improving his

own circumstances. The ryots, by being placed under him, sink from the rank of tenants of the Government to that of tenants of an individual. They are transferred from a superior who has no interest but in their protection and welfare, to one whose interest is to enlarge his own property at the expense of theirs; who seeks by every way, however unjustifiable, to get into his own hands all the best lands of the village, and whose situation affords him many facilities in depriving the ancient possessors of them. The ryots are jealous of a man, from whose new power and influence they have so much to fear. They frequently combine in order to keep down the cultivation and force him, for their own security, to give up the village; and hence it has happened that on one side the opposition of the ryots, and on the other the oppression of the new zemindar, have in many instances caused villages which were flourishing and moderately assessed, to revert to the sirkár, from inability to pay their assessment. If we cannot make a permanent settlement with these village zemindárs, neither is it possible to make one, or even a lease for a term of years, with the ryots, because their properties are in general so small that numbers of them fail, and must fail every year, from the most ordinary accidents.

The spirit of adventure is one cause of the number of small holdings.

Some men are apt to suppose, when they find in almost every district two or three hundred ryots who require remission for a part, for the half, or even the whole of their rents, that the assessment is too high, or that there is something wrong in the system, and they proceed immediately to recommend a change from the ryotwári to something else. But assessment, though it is often the cause, is not the chief cause of the failure of such ryots. Where the landed property of a district is distributed among many thousand ryots, and where there is no limitation to subdivision, except what is imposed by the produce of the land being inadequate to the subsistence of the ryot, it is evident that there will be many gradations of ryots, descending gradually from those holding the largest properties to those holding portions of land too small for their maintenance. It is evident that a lower assessment will not prevent this, nor cause any other change than that of making the smallest portion of land on which the ryot can subsist somewhat smaller than before, without rendering him in any degree less liable to failure. There are many ryots who fail from another cause

which no abatement of assessment can remove, and which it is not desirable should be removed; it is occasioned by a spirit of independence among the caste of husbandmen, which urges every labouring servant who can buy a pair of bullocks, to quit his master and to take land and cultivate for himself. In this undertaking many fail, because the loss of a bullock, or an adverse season, destroys their small means; but by far the greater number finally succeed, and their success adds to the resources of the country. It is like the spirit of adventure in trade, which, though it frequently ruins individuals, yet promotes at the same time the prosperity of the country. We must, therefore, in a district containing two or three thousand ryots, always expect to find two or three hundred who are unable to pay their rent. We must, according to usage, grant them a remission for a few years, until they can do without it, and encourage rather than repress the spirit of independence, which, we may be sure, will excite industry.

Permanent settlements with zemindárs and leases with ryots are neither the usage of the country, nor are they beneficial. The question is whether we shall raise our present landholders or create a new set.

It is not necessary that we should have either permanent settlements with zemindárs or leases with the ryots: neither of them is the usage of the country, and neither is requisite for the security of the revenue or the benefit of the ryot.

But though we cannot obtain a permanent rent from each individual ryot, we may, by a fixed assessment upon the land, obtain a revenue from the whole body of the ryots sufficiently permanent for every useful purpose. It will rise or fall somewhat with bad seasons, but the average for a term of years will be nearly the same. If we wish to make the lands of the ryots yield them a landlord's rent, we have only to lower and fix the assessment, and we shall then in time have the great body of the ryots possessing landed properties, yielding a landlord's rent, but small in extent. They cannot be otherwise while their present institutions remain, as these all tend to the subdivision of property. If, in place of lowering the assessment and letting landed property rise in the natural way, we want to have great landlords raised at once where none exist, and for this purpose create zemindárs, and turn over to each of them some hundreds of ryots, we shall commit a gross injustice, because we shall enable the zemindár in time to degrade the ryots from the rank of tenants in chief to that of tenants at will, and often to that of mere cultivators or labourers. We say that we leave the ryots free to act, and to make their own

terms with the zemindárs or renters, and that if they are wronged, the Courts will protect them. We put them out of sight, deliver them over to a superior, and then we tell them that they are free to make their own terms, and that there are Courts to secure their rights. But with what pretence of justice can we place them under any set of men, to make terms for their property, and to defend it against them in Courts of Law? They have no superior but Government, they are tenants in chief, and ought not to be obliged to make terms except with Government. But it is said that the zemindár does not infringe their rights, because he has no authority to demand more than the dues of Government, as regulated by the usage of the country, and that if the parties be left to themselves, things will find their proper level. They will find the level which they have found in Bengal, and in several districts under that Government, and which the weak always find when they are left to contend with the strong. The question is, whether we are to continue the country in its natural state, occupied by a great body of independent ryots, and to enable them by a lighter assessment to rise gradually to the rank of landlords; or whether we are to place the country in an artificial state by dividing it into villages or larger districts, among a new class of landholders, who will inevitably at no distant period, by the subdivision of their new property, fall to the level of ryots, while the ryots will at the same time have sunk from the rank of independent tenants in chief to that of sub-tenants and cultivators? It is, whether we are to raise the landholders we have, or to create a new set and see them fall? This question, it is to be hoped, has been set at rest by the orders of the Court of Directors to make the settlement with the ryots, in all districts in which the permanent zemindári settlement has not been established.

Decision of the Court of Directors.

The settlement should be made with the ryots, who should have full liberty to give up land which they cannot cultivate profitably. The assessment should be fixed.

In all those provinces whose revenues are, by ancient usage, paid chiefly in money, surveys appear to have been made at different remote periods, in order to fix the assessment. In some districts they are only known by tradition; in others they still exist, in a mutilated shape, in the curnum's accounts; but there is no certainty that these accounts belong to any particular survey, or that they are not made of fragments of several, or that the village accounts have not been so altered by the curnums, without any regular authority, as

to contain no trace of any survey whatever. Though the village accounts were supposed to have a specific rate of assessment for every field, according to the class to which it belonged, the Collectors were not made to conform very rigidly to this rate, but were usually somewhat above or below it, according to the nature of the season and other circumstances. The farm or estate of a ryot was generally composed of three parts: the first and principal was his old farm, containing the lands which he always occupied; the second, but much smaller part, containing land of an inferior quality, was called his katguta, and was held at a low and fixed rent; and the third was his cowle land, taken from the waste of the village, which he cultivated one, two, or more years, and then threw up or kept, according to the terms of the cowle or engagement. In all cases where the rent of a ryot was raised, it was done by imposing an additional assessment on his old farm. The katguta and cowle lands were always exempted, because to have imposed an additional settlement upon them would have been regarded as a breach of engagement, and would have discouraged the extension of cultivation. In some districts the addition made in one year to the rate of assessment was taken off the next; in others it was continued, and fresh additions of five, ten, or fifteen per cent. were made at subsequent periods and rendered permanent. The aggregate of these extra additions frequently came in time to equal or exceed the original assessment. But there is reason to suppose that these additions were in a great degree nominal, and that they did little more than counterbalance the fraudulent reductions made by the curnums in the accounts of the original assessment. These extra rates were usually unwillingly paid at first; and instead, therefore, of imposing them, it was often thought more advisable to give the ryot a piece of waste land, the rent of which he was required to pay, whether he could cultivate it or not. The ruling power always endeavoured to encourage, or rather to force, the extension of cultivation as a plea for drawing a larger revenue from the country. The result of such a system, pursued for ages, has been what was to be expected, namely, that the extent of land in cultivation and paying revenue is much too great for the agricultural stock of the country; that every ryot has more land than he can cultivate

properly, and that he is only prevented from throwing up a part of it by the well-grounded fear that the difference of rent would be thrown upon the part which he retains. This is the state of cultivation generally throughout the Deccan, and it was, and still is in a great degree that of most of the provinces which have fallen by conquest under the authority of the Madras Government. The excess of land occupied by the ryots, beyond what they can adequately cultivate, varies in different provinces, and is estimated at from one-tenth to one-third, and may be reckoned on an average at one-fifth. It is obvious, however, that by more land being occupied than could be properly occupied, the rent must in time have adapted itself to this state of things and become lower than it would otherwise have been, and that a fixed assessment made on such rent would be favourable in general to the cultivators or ryots. It is also obvious from what has been said, that if, after making such a fixed assessment, perfect freedom were given to the ryots to throw up whatever land they did not want, they would throw up about one-fifth of their land, and thereby diminish the revenue nearly in the same proportion. But this diminution would only be temporary, because, as the ryots, by concentrating their agricultural stock upon a similar extent of land, would obtain a greater produce from it, their means would gradually increase, and enable them to take and cultivate again the land which they had relinquished. Under annual settlements and fluctuating assessments they are not very anxious about throwing up land, because they know that, by the custom of the country, we can raise the assessment upon the remaining land, according to its produce and improvement; but whenever the assessment has been fixed, they soon discover the advantage which it gives them, and endeavour to get rid of all their extra land. The liberty of doing so has already been partially granted, and must be fully granted to them; for, though it will cause a temporary loss of revenue, it is a sacrifice which ought to be made for the sake of securing the great public benefit of a permanent revenue, founded upon the general establishment of private landed property. It is the ever-varying assessment which has prevented, and, as long as it continues, will prevent, land from becoming a valuable property; for even where the assessment is lowest, the

knowledge that it may at any time be raised, hinders the land from acquiring such a value as to render it a saleable article. We cannot communicate to it the value which it ought to possess, or render it a private property, capable of being easily sold or mortgaged, unless the public assessment upon every part of it be previously fixed. When it is fixed, all uncertainty is removed, and all land which is not absolutely overassessed, soon acquires a value, which is every day increased by improvements made in consequence of the certainty of reaping all the profit arising from them.

The effects of a fixed assessment in Baramahal, Coimbatore, and in the Ceded Districts.

The introduction of the fixed assessment into the Baramahal, Coimbatore, and other provinces, has not been so successful as it ought to have been in establishing private landed property; but it has been as successful as could reasonably have been expected, when we consider that it had no fair trial, and that it had hardly begun to operate when it was supplanted by a new system of permanent leases and settlements. Had it been left to produce its own effect, undisturbed by a change, there can be little doubt but that private landed property would by this time have been very generally established in those provinces. Its progress would have been faster or slower, according as the rate of assessment was more or less moderate. The rate of assessment, though somewhat lower than that of the native princes, was generally high, but not so high as to prevent the gradual growth of landed property. Wherever it might, in particular cases, have been found to produce this effect, the evil would have been easily remedied by a proportionate reduction. The survey assessment, however, notwithstanding all the difficulties by which it was opposed, has laid the foundation of private landed property in districts in which it was never known before, in the Baramahal, Coimbatore, and the Ceded Districts; and this beginning will gradually spread over all the land of these provinces. In the Baramahal, land has become saleable for several years' purchase in many villages of every district, and even in Ahtur, the most highly assessed of all districts. In the Ceded Districts land has become saleable in two or three districts of the Ballári division, and in several villages of almost every district in the Cuddapah division. In all these districts the survey assessment has, besides giving a beginning to private landed property, simplified and facili-

tated the collection of revenue. No survey assessment of a great province can ever at once be made so correct as not to require future alteration: when therefore it has been completed with as much care as possible, a trial should always be made of it for six or seven years. This period will be sufficient to discover all defects in the assessment. A general revision of it should then be made, and wherever it may be found too high, it should be lowered, and it may then with safety to the revenue and benefit to the people be made permanent. None of the districts, however, in which the survey assessment has been introduced, had the benefit of such a trial, as in all of them a permanent settlement or lease was introduced very soon after the completion of the survey. Coimbatore was more fortunate than the rest: it escaped the decennial lease, and is now the best ordered, the most easily managed, and the most thriving district under the Madras Government. A survey assessment, besides its other advantages, prevents thousands of disputes and litigations about rent and boundaries, and it furnishes a standard by which the revenue of the country can at any time be raised or lowered, according as the state of affairs may require an increase of the burdens of the people, or may admit of their diminution. I trust that we shall never have occasion to go beyond the original assessment, and that we shall in time be able to make considerable reductions in it. The fixed assessment will not for some years have the same effect in encouraging improvements as it had before the introduction of the leases and permanent settlements; because these measures have shaken the confidence of the ryots in the continuance of the present system, and will render them cautious in undertaking improvements, lest they should be prevented from enjoying the full benefit of them, by being again placed under a renter or zemindár. Some years, therefore, must yet elapse before this apprehension can subside and the survey assessment have its full effect in encouraging improvement and promoting the growth of landed property.

Every assessment requires to be revised after a few years' trial.

There are, however, several extensive provinces in which we have no control over the assessment, and scarcely any means of bettering the condition of the ryots; I mean the Northern Sirkárs. When these districts came into our possession, one part of them was in the hands of zemindárs, and the

Unfavourable position of the ryots in the Northern Sirkárs owing to the omission to define their rights.

other and most valuable part was in the hands of Government, and has since, by the permanent settlement, been made over to new zemindárs of our own creation. As in these provinces no fixed assessment has been introduced, nor the rights of the ryots been defined, the ryots never can become landholders, nor their lands acquire such a value as to make them saleable. It may be said that they have a right to be assessed only according to ancient usage, and that this right will secure them from undue exaction, and give them the same facilities as the ryots of the Government districts of rendering their land a valuable property; but many causes combine to prevent this. The ancient usage was different in every little district or even village. It is not recorded or defined, and is very little known to us. It is, I believe, in the Northern Sirkárs very generally so high as to leave the ryot no more than the bare recompense of his labour and stock, and thus to preclude his ever obtaining any portion of a landlord's rent. Even supposing that usage did leave to the ryot some surplus as landlord's rent, the zemindár might not permit him to enjoy it. He might raise the assessment. If he were an old zemindár or hill Rájá, the fear of violence would deter the ryot from complaining. If he were a new zemindár the ryot would, nine times in ten, submit quietly to the loss, not from fear of personal injury, but from the well founded fear of losing his cause in the Court. He knows that the influence of the zemindár would easily procure witnesses to swear falsely on the question of usage, and that they would be supported by the fabricated accounts of the curnum, who is entirely under the authority of the zemindár, and that if he even gained his cause it would be of no advantage to him, as the zemindár, without transgressing any law, would be able to harass him in many ways, and make his situation uncomfortable.

Prospect of an improvement in their position very remote.

There is therefore no prospect, or only a very distant one, of our being able to establish landed property among the ryots of the Northern Sirkárs, or to improve their condition in any material degree. In the old zemindáries, which are chiefly among the unhealthy hills, our prospect is as good now as it ever was; because we never there exercised any direct authority over the ryots, and could not expect to see landed property grow up among them, until time should gradually have wrought such a change in the manners and opinions of their leading

men, as to make them see the expediency of encouraging it. But in the new zemindáries we exercised a direct authority over all the inhabitants, and could have raised their condition and landed property at our pleasure; but we lost the power of doing so by the permanent settlement. It may be said that Government having set a limit upon its demand upon the zemindár, he will also set a limit to his demand upon the ryot, and leave him the full produce of every improvement, and thus enable him to render his land a valuable property. But we have no reason to suppose that this will be the case, either from the practice of the new zemindárs during the twenty years they have existed, or from that of the old zemindárs during a succession of generations. In old zemindáries, whether held by the Rájás of the Sirkárs or the poligárs of the more southern provinces, which have from a distant period been held at a low and fixed peshcash, no indulgence has been shown to the ryots, no bound has been set to the demand upon them. The demand has risen with improvement, according to the custom of the country, and the land of the ryot has no saleable value; we ought not, therefore, to be surprised that in the new zemindáries, whose assessment is so much higher, the result has been equally unfavourable to the ryots. The new zemindáries will, by division among heirs, and failures in their payments, break up into portions of one or two villages; but this will not better the condition of the ryot. It will not fix the rent of the land, or render it a valuable property; it will merely convert one large zemindári into several small zemindáries or múttas, and múttas of a kind much more injurious than those of the Baramahal to the ryots; because, in the Baramahal, the assessment of the ryots' land had previously been fixed by survey, while in the new zemindáries of the Sirkárs it had been left undefined. The little will in time share the fate of the great zemindáries; they will be divided and fail, and finally revert to Government, and the ryots after this long and circuitous course will again become what they originally were, the immediate tenants of Government; and Government will then have it in its power to survey their lands, to lower and fix the assessment upon them, and to lay the foundation of landed property in the land of the ryots, where alone, in order to be successful, it must be laid.

The state of the landed property of the country, held

Meaning of the term ryotwári settlement.

almost everywhere by the ryots directly of Government, clearly points out to us what our revenue system ought to be, and that it cannot, consistently with usage, be other than ryotwári. This term has been often much misunderstood, and been supposed to mean some mode of settlement entirely new, which overthrows all former rights. But this is altogether a mistake; the term itself is the ancient and common one of the country, and is used merely from the want of an English one exactly corresponding with it. In revenue language it means a settlement with the individual ryot who owns or occupies the land, and the receiving the public assessment from him without the intervention of any renter or zemindár. Whether the assessment be a fixed rent in kind, or a fixed share of the crop in kind, or commuted into money, or a fixed or varying money rent, it makes no difference; it is still ryotwári.

Varieties of assessment obtaining under the general head ryotwári. Expediency of introducing a fixed, but moderate, money assessment.

All these varieties of assessment prevail more or less in the provinces under Government; but though they all come under the general denomination of ryotwári, their effects on the prosperity of the country are very different; and it is therefore an important object that the kind of ryotwári which is most conducive to improvement, namely, a fixed and moderate money assessment, should be everywhere gradually introduced. But before we endeavour to make such a change in any district, it is absolutely necessary that we should survey its lands, and ascertain as nearly as possible its average revenue for a long series of years. If we attempt without this knowledge to convert a fluctuating into a fixed rent, we shall certainly fail, even if our knowledge should be so complete as to enable us to distribute fairly upon the land a fair assessment exactly equal to its former average revenue. This will not be sufficient, for the ryots will not agree to the change without some abatement. The abatement must not be nominal, and existing only in our accounts, but real and absolute, and will amount probably to eight or ten per cent.; and we must satisfy them it is so if we expect success. If the ryot is convinced that the reduction offered to him is real, it will not be difficult to get him to accede to a fixed assessment. The chief cause of the difficulty which is usually found in prevailing upon him to agree to such a change, is, that he thinks there is either no actual abatement, or that it is so small as not to compensate for the loss and inconvenience to which he might be subjected in

unfavourable years by a fixed assessment. In his dealing with any private individual he would not hesitate to stipulate to pay annually a fixed sum in money, rather than a varying sum in grain, if he thought it would be more profitable. He will follow the same course in his engagements with Government, whenever he is satisfied that he will be a gainer by it. To conduct a survey, however, and convert a fluctuating grain into a fixed money assessment, require a union of experience, industry, and temper, which is not always found. This must necessarily render the progress of the work slow, but it ought not to discourage us. Much has been already done, and what remains to be done will be more perfect, from the opportunity which the delay will afford of discovering and rectifying former errors.

Uses of a detailed settlement.

It has been objected to the ryotwári system that it produces unequal assessment and destroys ancient rights and privileges; but these opinions seem to originate in some misapprehension of its nature. In arguing against it in favour of a zemindári system, it has been maintained that a detailed settlement must ever lead to inequality of taxation; but there seems to be no reason why the detailed should, more than any other settlement, produce inequality. It is to good or bad cultivation, and other circumstances common to all settlements, that unequal taxation is owing, and it must take place with regard to the lands of the ryots, whether they are held immediately of Government, or of a zemindár or renter. The use of a detailed settlement is not to prevent what can never be prevented—unequal assessment—but to prevent the assessment from being anywhere excessive; to furnish us with the best information respecting the resources of the country; and by giving us a complete register of all its lands, showing the extent and assessment of each field, to enable us to judge, whenever there is a failure in the revenue, whether it arises from the assessment or from some other cause. As it is one main principle of Indian revenue, that all land, when cultivated, is liable to the public assessment, and when left uncultivated is exempt from it, it is manifest that, without the detailed settlement, the amount of the revenue for the year could not be correctly ascertained.

The rent payable to Government

It has also been argued that it is useless to impose a fixed assessment upon each field or lot of land, because the produce

should not exceed what the land is able to pay under the most ordinary degree of culture.

will always fluctuate according to the culture. This objection would be a very just one, if it were intended that the rent payable to Government should always correspond with the produce; but this is not the case. All that is necessary in fixing the Government rent, is that it shall not be higher than what the land is able to yield under the most ordinary degree of culture: whatever extra produce is derived from any culture beyond this, should go exclusively to the ryot—Government should have no share in it. Improved cultivation will, of course, regulate the rent between the proprietor or ryot and his tenant, but not between the ryot and the Government; and if Government is satisfied with the moderate rent arising from common cultivation, the lands, if cultivated at all, will yield this rent, and there is no danger that any fluctuation in the degrees of culture will preclude the realization of the field assessment. By common usage, where there is no fixed field assessment, Government receives in kind a high share of the produce, or in money a high rent; and its rent, whether in kind or money, rises with the produce. By the field assessment, Government will receive a rent somewhat lower than the present one; and as it will be fixed, and not rise with improvement, it will be more likely to be permanently realized. It has been asserted, in speaking of the mirási privileges in the Carnatic, that the ryotwári assessment destroyed by violence all these ancient usages and customs, and so completely, that both Mr. Græme and Mr. Ravenshaw have denied the existence of mirási in these provinces. The ryotwári settlement, when properly conducted, respects all private rights: to ascertain and secure them are among its principal objects. The carelessness or the over zeal of Collectors may invade them under any settlement whatever, if they are not restrained by superior authority.

Answers to the objections commonly advanced against the ryotwári system.

It has been objected to the ryotwári system, that it is intricate, difficult of management, and expensive; but experience contradicts these opinions, for wherever ryotwári has been properly established, it has been found to be more easy, simple, and efficient than any other kind of settlement. The idea of its being more expensive arises from not considering that it includes all the expenses of collection which would be incurred by zemindárs if the country were under them, and which would, in that case, be necessarily deducted from the

amount of the revenue, and not appear as a charge. One great advantage which the ryotwári settlement has over every other, is the strength and security which it gives to our Government, by bringing us into direct communication with the great body of the ryots, or landowners. Objections may be urged to every system: it is enough to recommend it to our adoption to know that it is the common one of the country. It is one of the primary obligations of a Government like ours to suit its rules and forms of local administration to the condition of the people, to provide every establishment which it may require, and not to withhold anything which may be necessary to its efficiency, for the sake of avoiding either labour or expense.

Agency by which the land revenue should be administered.

Policy of employing natives on higher salaries and in more important offices.

When we have determined the principles on which the land revenue is to be fixed, the next question is, by what agency is it to be managed? There can be no doubt that it ought, as far as practicable, to be native. Juster views have of late years been taken of this subject, and the Court of Directors have authorized the employment of the natives on higher salaries and in more important offices. There is true economy in this course; for by it they will have better servants, and their affairs will be better conducted. It was from a conviction of the policy of extending native agency, that the establishment of the Revenue Board cutcherry was recommended in 1822. The right of the people to be taxed only by their own consent has always, in every free country, been esteemed amongst the most important of all privileges: it is that which has most exercised the minds of men, and which has oftenest been asserted by the defenders of liberty. Even in countries in which there is no freedom, taxation is the most important function of Government, because it is that which most universally effects the comfort and happiness of the people, and that which has oftenest excited them to resistance; and hence both its utility and its danger have, under the most despotic Governments, taught the necessity of employing in its administration the ablest men of the country.

It is both necessary and politic to admit natives to a share in the business of taxing their own country.

In this point, at least, we ought to be guided by the example of those governments, and employ intelligent and experienced natives at the head of the revenue, to assist the Revenue Board. If in other departments we give experienced natives to assist the European officers, shall we not give them

in this, whose duties are the most difficult and most important? We cannot exclude them from it without injury to ourselves as well as to them; we cannot conduct the department efficiently without them. But even if we could, policy requires that we should let them have a share in the business of taxing their own country. It attaches them to our Government, it raises them in their own estimation, and it encourages them, by the prospect of attaining a situation of so much distinction, to qualify themselves for it by a zealous performance of their duty. Although we can never leave entirely to the natives the power of taxing the country, we ought to entrust them with as much of it as possible under our superintendence. We ought to make them acquainted with our objects in taxation, and with the principles on which we wish it to be founded, in order that in communicating their opinions to us, they may not be guided by the mere object of raising the revenue, but that of adapting the revenue to the wants of the State and the circumstances of the people. It is desirable that this knowledge should be widely diffused among natives; but it can only be effected by their having the benefit of free intercourse with us, and of acquiring experience in important official situations. They have the advantage of this intercourse already in the cutcherries attached to Collectors, and to the Board of Revenue; and under many of the Collectors this advantage is rendered more general, by their hearing the opinions of the most intelligent heads of villages, and of respectable inhabitants not in the service of Government, and discussing in their presence questions of revenue. This establishes confidence in us among the natives, and gradually extends among them juster and more enlarged views of the purposes for which taxation is intended.

Mistaken views of the advocates of zemindári settlements.

This kind of intercourse, however, could hardly subsist, or be productive of any advantage, if we adopted the opinions of most of the advocates of zemindári settlements, that the Collector ought not to enter into details of revenue, but leave the natives to conduct them and settle with each other in their own way, and that he should confine himself to their general superintendence under the guidance of general principles. This appears to me to be a mistaken doctrine, which ought to be avoided; because in order to maintain our power in India we must have able and skilful servants, and such

servants could not possibly be produced by merely learning a few general principles, without making them acquainted with the character of the people and the rules and customs by which their transactions with each other and with the officers of Government are usually regulated. The good government of the country must rest very much on the talents of our local officers, as it is from them chiefly that Government must derive its own information; and hence there is no country in the world in which it is more absolutely necessary to have good public servants than in this. When a European is placed in charge of a district permanently settled and belonging to a few great zemindárs, who conduct all the details of the assessment and collection of the revenue, he has very little to do. No exertion is required from him, and he naturally becomes indolent: if the affairs of the district fall into confusion, he cannot put them right, because, as he has not made himself acquainted with the revenue details and local usages, and has no practical experience, he is ignorant of the cause of the disorder, and of the means by which it is to be remedied. His knowledge of general principles, however extensive it may be, will in such an emergency be of little use, because he will not know how to apply them to the local circumstances of the country. The duties of the Collector of a province should be such as to make it imperative on him to know the real state of the country, the amount of the assessment paid by the different classes of the inhabitants, its effects upon them, but especially upon the ryots, in promoting or discouraging industry and in rendering them satisfied or discontented with their rules, and to know all the details of internal administration by which the revenue is developed and realized; for it is only by possessing such knowledge that he can understand either what are the actual resources of the country, or the means by which they may be improved, or furnish useful information to Government.

The duties of a public officer entrusted with the charge of a province ought to be such as to require the constant use of his faculties. Without this employment they become dull, and he is satisfied with remaining at the head of a province, for the management of which he is totally unqualified, and it is probably not until something goes wrong that his utter unfitness is discovered.

The Civil Servants of the Company mix but little with the native community; they have no common interest with it, and it is only such of them as have naturally a spirit of inquiry, or who are forced by the duties of their situation to inquire, that know anything about it, or can tell Government whether any particular law is popular or the reverse.

Importance of enabling the Government to obtain accurate information as to the condition and opinions of the people through the local officers.

Government itself knows nothing of the state of the country, except what it learns from its local officers. In other countries, Government and its officers are a part of the community, and are of course acquainted with the effect of every public measure, and the opinion of the country regarding it. But here Government is deprived of this advantage. It makes laws for a people who have no voice in the matter, and of whom it knows very little; and it is therefore evident that it cannot adapt its laws to the circumstances of the people, unless it receive accurate information upon this subject from active and intelligent local officers, whose duty it is to investigate carefully the condition and opinions of the inhabitants, and to report upon them. But these officers can acquire this information only through an establishment of experienced native servants, who have, beyond all other men, from the very nature of their official duties, the best means of obtaining it. Intelligent Collectors are necessary at all times, but more especially when it becomes expedient either to raise or lower the revenue. Such an operation requires not judgment alone, but great knowledge of details; and if undertaken without these essential requisites, would be productive of much mischief. We ought, therefore, not to be satisfied with a superficial knowledge of the general state of the country, but make it a part of our system to obtain the most minute and accurate information concerning its internal condition, and preserve and accumulate that information in clear and detailed revenue accounts and statistical statements.

Incapacity of the ryots to resist oppression.

The peculiar character and condition of the ryots require that some laws should be made specially for their protection. The non-resistance of the ryots in general to oppression has been too little attended to in our Regulations. We make laws for them as though they were Englishmen, and are surprised that they should have no operation. A law might be a very good one in England and useless here. This arises from the different characters of the people. In England the people

resist oppression, and it is their spirit which gives efficacy to the law: in India the people rarely resist oppression, and the law intended to secure them from it can therefore derive no aid from themselves. Though the ryots frequently complain of illegal exactions, they very seldom resist them: they more commonly submit without complaining, and they often abscond when they have no longer the means of paying for them.

It is in vain to caution them against paying by telling them that the law is on their side, and will support them in refusing to comply with unauthorized demands. All exhortations on this head are thrown away, and after listening to them they will the very next day submit to extortion as quietly as before. Some of the more bold and intelligent, it is true, withhold payment and complain; but the number is so small as to have no sensible effect; for the great mass submit quietly, and will continue for generations to submit, until a total change shall have been wrought in their character. There is nothing extraordinary in this: it is the natural consequence of their condition. They had always, under their native princes, been accustomed to implicit submission to the demands of the Government officers. Both they and their princes have long since been under a foreign yoke, first of Mahomedans, and afterwards of Europeans, and their exclusion under both from all share in the Government, has rendered the ryots of less consideration, and made them still less disposed to resist unauthorized exactions than under their ancient native rulers. As, therefore, they will not protect themselves by resisting injustice, we must endeavour to protect them by laws which would be unnecessary in England, or in almost any other country not under foreign dominion; and we must, for this salutary purpose, invest the Collector and Magistrate, the person most interested in their welfare, with power to secure them from exaction, by authorizing him to make summary inquiry into all illegal exactions, to recover the amount, to restore whatever is recovered to the ryots, and to punish the offenders. We suppose that our laws are founded upon just principles, and that they must therefore have the same beneficial operation here as at home; but we forget that one great first principle, the freedom of the people, from which they derive their influence, does not exist here. Our institutions here, not resting on the same foundation as

Causes of this incapacity.

those of a free country, cannot be made to act in the same way. We cannot make the inanimate corpse perform the same functions as the living body; we must therefore, in making Regulations here, think only of their probable effect in this country, not of what such Regulations have or might have in England. We must often entrust powers here which we would not there; we must even sometimes make a man a judge, where he may be said in some degree to be a party; but in this case we are to consider whether it is not indispensable to the protection of the people.

Evils resulting from the joint action of the judicial code and revenue system.

For some years past it has been the object of Government to legislate as little as possible, and the few Regulations which have been passed are less to provide for new matters, than to cancel or amend former Regulations found to be unsuitable to the circumstances of the country. Two great evils which resulted from the joint operation of our judicial code and revenue system, were the frequent distraint of the property, and imprisonment of the persons of the principal ryots on account of balances. The confinement usually continued for many years, the prisoners frequently died in the course of it, and the debt was seldom realized. The default was sometimes occasioned by fraud, but much oftener by inability arising from unavoidable losses, and it was always difficult to ascertain the real cause. It has been the main end of the provisions of some late Regulations to lessen these evils; and if they produce the desired effect, which there is little reason to doubt, they will confer a most important benefit upon the people. The practice of distraint has been already greatly diminished, and the Collector of Salem, in his report of last year, observes that the whole of the land revenue of that province, amounting to about seventeen lakhs of rupees, has been realized without a single case of distraint. It was my wish to have abolished altogether the punishment of imprisonment for arrears of land-rent, because I thought that the loss from fraud would never be very considerable, and that it would be better that the revenues should suffer, than that a remedy so harsh and unpopular should be continued; but it appeared safer, on the whole, to adopt the opinion of my colleagues, that the power of imprisonment should be retained, but its exercise limited. The good effects of this measure have already been extensively felt: the imprisonment

of a ryot for a balance of rent is now a rare occurrence. On the 30th of September last the number of persons in gaol under this presidency, confined by the several Collectors for arrears of rent, was forty-five; but of these only two were ryots—the rest were adventurers, who generally engage in farming the sale of spirits, intoxicating drugs, and tobacco, and are usually fraudulent defaulters. When we consider that the land-rent is collected from 954,952 individuals holding immediately of Government, this result is extremely satisfactory.

Innovation the ruling vice of our Government.

Our great error in this country, during a long course of years, has been too much precipitation in attempting to better the condition of the people, with hardly any knowledge of the means by which it was to be accomplished, and indeed without seeming to think that any other than good intentions are necessary. It is a dangerous system of Government, in a country of which our knowledge is very imperfect, to be constantly urged, by the desire of settling everything permanently, to do everything in a hurry, and in consequence wrong, and, in our zeal for permanency, to put the remedy out of our reach. The ruling vice of our Government is innovation; and its innovation has been so little guided by a knowledge of the people, that, though made after what was thought by us to be mature discussion, it must appear to them as little better than the result of mere caprice. We have in our anxiety to make everything as English as possible in a country which resembles England in nothing, attempted to create at once, throughout extensive provinces, a kind of landed property which had never existed in them; and in the pursuit of this object, we have relinquished the rights which the sovereign always possessed in the soil, and we have in many cases deprived the real owners, the occupant ryots, of their proprietary rights, and bestowed them on zemindárs and other imaginary landlords. Changes like these can never effect a permanent settlement in any country; they are rather calculated to unsettle whatever was before deemed permanent. We erroneously think that all that is necessary for the permanent settlement of a country is, that Government should limit its own demand, and that it is of no consequence by whom this demand is collected; and that, provided the amount be not exceeded, the ryot is not injured, whether he pay it

As instanced by the creation of zemindárs.

to the officer of Government or to a newly created zemindár landlord. But nothing can be more unfounded than this opinion, or more mischievous in its operation; for it is a matter not of indifference, but of the highest importance, by whom the Government land-rent is collected and paid. Every proprietor or ryot, great and small, ought to pay his own rent and that of his tenants, when he has any, to the Government officer. If, instead of doing this, some hundreds of proprietary ryots are made to pay their public rents to a zemindár, they will soon lose their independence, become his tenants, and probably end by sinking into the class of labourers. Such an innovation would be much more fatal to the old rights of property than conquest by a foreign enemy; for such a conquest, though it overthrew the Government, would leave the people in their former condition. But this internal change, this village revolution, changes everything, and throws both influence and property into new hands: it deranges the order of society: it depresses one class of men for the sake of raising another: it weakens the respect and authority of ancient offices and institutions, and the local administration conducted by their means is rendered much more difficult. It is time that we should learn that neither the face of a country, its property, nor its society, are things that can be suddenly improved by any contrivance of ours, though they may be greatly injured by what we mean for their good; that we should take every country as we find it, and not rashly attempt to regulate its landed property, either in its accumulation or division; that, whether it be held by a great body of ryots, or by a few zemindárs, or by a mixture of both, our business is not with its distribution, but with its protection; and that if, while we protect, we assess it moderately, and leave it to its natural course, it will in time flourish, and assume that form which is most suitable to the condition of the people.

Necessity for an accurate survey of each province.

I have in the course of this Minute urged again and again the expediency of lowering our land revenue, and of establishing a moderate and fixed assessment, because I am satisfied that this measure alone would be much more effectual than all other measures combined, in promoting the improvement both of the country and of the people. But before we can lower the land revenue to the best advantage, we ought to

know clearly what it is we are giving up. As the information requisite for this purpose can only be obtained from an accurate survey of each province, these surveys, where still wanting, should be undertaken wherever the Collectors are equal to the task. When completed, they will furnish a groundwork on which the land revenue of the country may with safety hereafter be lowered or raised, according to circumstances. We should look forward to a time when it may be lowered. India should, like England, be relieved from a part of her burdens whenever the state of affairs may permit such a change. Whatever surplus might remain after the payment of all civil and military charges, and of all charges connected with the improvement or protection of the country, should be remitted. The remission granted in peace might be again imposed in war, and even something additional. This would probably obviate, in a great degree, the necessity of raising loans on the recurrence of war. The people would bear the addition willingly, when they knew that it was for a temporary object; and the remission which had been previously granted would dispose them the more readily to place confidence in the assurance of Government, that the increase was not intended to be made permanent.

The land revenue should be lowered when circumstances admit of a reduction, and raised again in time of war.

THE SUPERINTENDENCE OF TANK REPAIRS.

8th August, 1825.

Unnecessary correspondence and delays in connection with the repair of tanks.

THE present system under which the repairs of tanks are conducted, leads to much unnecessary correspondence, and to inconvenient delays in commencing upon the works, which, I think, might be remedied by adopting the following alterations:—

Remedies proposed.

1st. The whole of the Tank Department, including the Inspector-General and his office at the Presidency, to be placed under the immediate directions of the Board of Revenue.

2nd. All communications on the subject of tank repairs, roads, and choultries to be addressed by Collectors and Civil Engineers, as at present, to the Inspector, who will conduct the duties of the department in communication with, and under the orders of, the Board of Revenue, corresponding by order of the Board direct with Government, the Collectors, and Civil Engineers.

3rd. As it is proper, however, that Government should have the advantage of receiving the individual opinion of the Inspector in cases where it might differ from that of the Board, he should be at liberty to record it whenever he might think his doing so would be for the good of the service.

Advantages of the proposed changes.

4th. The chief advantages which would result from this change would be:—(1) Greater celerity in the despatch of business, which, in the Tank Department, is of the first importance; (2) the rendering unnecessary the frequent correspondence and references between the Board of Revenue and Inspector-General, which now occupy much of the time of both officers; (3) the settling at once of all questions involving revenue, by personal communication with the Board;

(4) the superior weight which the directions and suggestions of the Inspector-General would have with Collectors and Civil Engineers, when issued under the orders and known to be the sentiments of the Board; and (5) the benefit of a ready reference to the records of both officers.

5th. The present system has perhaps too much the effect of removing responsibility from the Collector, and of making him take less interest than before its introduction in watching over the due repairs of his tanks. It has also a tendency, by the length and minute detail of its estimate forms, to cause the proper season of repairs to be lost in waiting for the preparation of the estimate, and it gives allowances to the native surveyors educated at the expense of the Company, far beyond what persons in that class of life seem to be entitled to. The Board of Revenue, in communication with the Inspector-General, should be directed to revise the existing rules, and to suggest such alterations as would, in their opinion, remedy the defects which have been noticed, and at the same time secure the efficiency of the system.

QUESTION OF PUBLIC SERVANTS HOLDING LAND.*

11th July, 1826.

Public servants should not hold land in the districts in which they serve.

I CONCUR entirely in the sentiments expressed by the Board of Revenue regarding the possession of lands by public servants, either by inheritance or private purchase, in the district in which they are employed, and the sale of lands by public auction for arrears of revenue to them and their connections. There is no prohibition against the possession of private property in land by public servants in the districts in which they serve. It is however better, on the whole, even in districts permanently settled, that a proprietor of land should hold no high office in the district in which his land lies. In districts not permanently settled the possession of land ought not to cause the removal of a tahsildár or other principal servant, but it ought to be sufficient to prevent the owner from being appointed to any high office in his own district. An influential officer like a tahsildár ought not to be permitted to purchase land in his own district, when sold either by private or public sale, without previously resigning his office. Should he purchase without resigning he should be dismissed from office, and if the purchase be of land sold for arrears of revenue, the sale should be null. It may be thought that there could be no harm in allowing him to purchase land when sold by private sale. But it appears to me to be objectionable on two grounds: first, on that of his becoming a landholder in his own district; and, secondly, on that of its leaving an opening for converting into a private what would otherwise have been a public sale. In all un-

* The principles enunciated in this Minute still regulate the holding of land by native public servants.

settled districts, but especially in Tanjore, where the settlements fluctuate annually according to prices, and in many villages both according to prices and to produce, the principal revenue servants have many means of causing the sale of lands and villages without appearing to be concerned in it. They may overrate the produce and the prices; they may prevent remission where it is necessary by underrating the loss of crop from want of water or other cause; and they may insist on punctual payment of the kist when the delay of a month or two would have saved the landowner from great loss, and he may in this manner often be obliged to sell his land in order to avoid a heavier loss by attempting to retain it. I believe that it is generally understood by the revenue servants that they are not to purchase land in the district in which they serve, and that this circumstance restrains them; but were this check removed by such purchases being openly authorized by Government, they would soon be carried to an extent which would be extremely injurious both to the landholders and to the public revenue.

The objections to the purchase by revenue servants of land sold for arrears of revenue.

The question of revenue officers being proprietors of land in their own districts, is, however, of much less consequence than that of they and their relations being the purchasers of land sold by public auction for arrears of revenue. Wherever such a practice is suffered to exist, it must tend to facilitate the oppression of the landowners, to spread corruption among the revenue servants, and to destroy the confidence of the people in the protection of the Government. The statement given by the Board of Revenue sufficiently proves how rapidly such a mischievous practice increases when it meets with any encouragement, as in Tanjore.

Balances of land revenue should not be demanded after a certain lapse of time.

The custom of keeping the accumulating balances of a great number of years standing against districts is productive of many serious evils, and is scarcely ever attended with any real advantage. We see how small a portion of them has been recovered in Tanjore, after the lapse of so many years and the adoption of such rigorous measures, and if we could trace all the effects of this recovery, we should probably find that it had been obtained partly out of the current year's revenue, and partly by disabling the proprietor from carrying on his cultivation to the usual extent, and that Government had, in fact, gained little or nothing by the recovery. We see

that these old balances are good for little else than furnishing the means of corrupting the revenue servants and of oppressing the inhabitants, and I am therefore of opinion that a period should be limited, beyond which no balance of land revenue should be demanded. It ought perhaps in no case to exceed two years after the close of the year in which the balance became due, but in general it might, probably with advantage, be confined to the commencement of the kists of the ensuing year or to the first six months of that year. This rule might be applicable, not only to all unsettled districts, but, with some exceptions, to all under temporary leases. The Board of Revenue might be desired to take the subject into consideration and report their sentiments regarding it, and in the mean time the remissions recommended by them in 1816, on account of the triennial and quinquennial leases in Tanjore, ought to be authorized.

ON THE REVENUE MANAGEMENT OF CERTAIN OF THE SOUTHERN DISTRICTS.

30th January, 1827.

System of assessment in Tanjore. Proposal to survey the district with a view to a field assessment.

ALTHOUGH Tanjore has been so long in our possession, very little progress has yet been made in the establishment of a fixed assessment upon the land. We have endeavoured of late years to make some approach to this important object, by fixing the amount of the grain rent of a large portion of the villages, and making the money rent of that grain fixed, as long as the market price does not fall five per cent. below, or rise ten per cent. above, a certain assumed standard rate. But this plan, though it might in time lead to a fixed money assessment for each whole village, would still leave the extent of land and the rate of assessment on each field in each village uncertain; and as a field assessment can only be effected by means of a survey, I am of opinion that it ought to be begun without delay.

Principles of the proposed survey and assessment.

The survey ought to be made upon the same principles as in those districts where the most complete surveys have been made. It should embrace all land—cultivated, waste, hill, and jungle. It should show the grain rent of each field, as well as the money rent, in order that the grain rent may be available in case the money rent should anywhere, from unforeseen causes, fail for a time.

Assessment should be moderate.

The assessment ought to be moderate. It is not the wish of Government to raise the revenue, but rather, by equalizing it, to make the burden lighter on the people. By equalizing, I do not mean that the rent of lands which have been rendered more productive at the expense of the owners, should be raised; but that when the assessment of lands equally

productive is from fraud or neglect very unequal, without any expense having been incurred in their improvement, such assessment shall be corrected.

No detailed rules can be laid down for the conduct of the survey. Any such rules would only tend to impede the work. The Principal Collector must be chiefly guided by his own judgment. Old accounts, former partial surveys, and former grain and money assessments may afford him some assistance, but he must exercise his own discretion, either in adopting what is right or rejecting what is wrong.

No objection to substituting a fixed money assessment for the system of assessment in force.

My principal object in visiting Tanjore was to ascertain whether there was any insuperable obstacle to the making of the revenue settlement by a fixed money assessment, and whether such a settlement would be acceptable to the people. The danger of prices falling, and remaining low for several successive years, has always been the main objection to a fixed money assessment. From all that I could learn on the spot during my short stay in the province, it appears to me that the mirásidárs, or landowners, but particularly the more substantial ones, are in general desirous of having a fixed money assessment on the land, provided it be moderate, and of being relieved from all interference, except in the collection of their rents.

Circumstances which facilitate such an assessment in Tanjore.

The establishment of a fixed money assessment ought to be more easy in Tanjore than in most other provinces, because none of them have a supply of water so certain and abundant as Tanjore has from the Cavery, and because the distribution upon the mirásidárs severally of the sum imposed upon the village, which in most other provinces is the most difficult part of the process, is in Tanjore the most easy, because the relative value of the land or fields to each other having long been known, and the share which each mirásidar was to pay of the whole assessment having long been settled among themselves, they would continue, under the fixed assessment—whether it might be higher or lower than the present or any former one—to pay according to the usual proportions, and each man would take care that no more than his fair share was imposed upon him.

Only difficulty consists in the defective character of the accounts.

The chief difficulty in Tanjore will be in determining the sum to be laid on each village, because there is a very great want of accounts for our guidance on which any dependence

can be placed. We have only some defective accounts of produce for the early years of the Company's administration, and none hardly during the long interval of the subsequent leases. There can be no doubt, however, that among upwards of four thousand villages comprised in the province, many are assessed at their just amount. By taking these villages as a standard, and by employing the mirásidárs of them in conjunction with the revenue servants to assess the contiguous villages at the same rate in relation to their produce, the same scale of assessment may be gradually extended over all the villages of the province; and when this is effected, there will be little difficulty in distributing the amount upon the several properties and fields.

The situation of Tanjore is singular, because, though placed on this side of the peninsula, the main part of its produce depends upon the rains of Malabar. It therefore frequently happens that in seasons when there is a scarcity in the adjoining districts, Tanjore enjoys the double advantage of an abundant harvest with scarcity prices. As Government has always partaken in this advantage under the system of a land revenue, founded on a commutation of a share of the produce for money at the market price, it probably realizes as much revenue by following the old usage as it would by adopting any other, and it may therefore be thought that no change is necessary. If we looked only to revenue, this might be true; but if we look to the constant vexatious interference with the ryots in the reaping and removing of their crops, to the fraudulent collusion between them and the inferior revenue servants in pilfering the grain, and to the general corruption in the superior revenue servants which such a system encourages, we cannot but feel the necessity of endeavouring to substitute a system less liable to abuse. Although a fixed money assessment on the land may for some years rather diminish than augment the revenue, I am persuaded that it will augment it in time, by facilitating the culture of products more valuable than grain, by rendering the proprietors more substantial, and by thus enabling them to extend their cultivation, and to bear without remission the losses of unfavourable seasons.*

Favourable situation of Tanjore.

Objections to a system of land revenue founded on a commutation of a share of the produce for money at the market price.

In Trichinopoly, in the districts watered by the Cavery, the

Trichinopoly.

* It was not until 1860, under the government of Sir Charles Trevelyan, that a fixed money assessment was introduced into Tanjore.

Extinction of the mirási rights in the dry districts.

lands are held by the same mirási or hereditary tenures as in Tanjore. In the dry districts the inhabitants do not claim the mirási rights. They cannot sell their land, and whenever they cease to cultivate it, it is transferred to any person the Government pleases. The mirási rights were enjoyed by the poligars of these districts, by whom they had probably been usurped upon the ancient proprietors, and they are now considered as having devolved upon the Government by the expulsion of the poligars. While the land was regarded as public property, while the assessment was so high as to leave little or no profit to the cultivator, and while there was abundance of waste which any person might have, who chose to cultivate it and pay the assessment, it could hardly become private property, or acquire such value as to become saleable. But the assessment has of late years been considerably reduced, and when the inhabitants shall have for some time longer enjoyed the benefit of the reduction, and shall from experience have gained confidence in its stability, they will set a higher value on their lands, occupy them permanently, and gradually render them a valuable private property, as in the wet districts.

Money assessment in force in Trichinopoly.

The annual settlements in Trichinopoly are more satisfactory than in Tanjore, because they are formed upon a principle known to everybody—upon a money assessment which is probably moderate, because there were no complaints against it, and because the value of land has increased within these years. Trichinopoly, by having a register of fields and a fixed assessment upon each, possesses the means by which its annual land-rent may be easily and fairly settled.

Tinnevelly. Great defects of the revenue management.

In Tinnevelly there is no system of revenue management—none appears to have ever been established. The system, such as it is, is calculated to keep the Collector in ignorance of the state of the district, and seems to have answered this purpose completely. There are no detailed accounts, or even abstracts, in his cutcherry that can be depended upon. Too much is left to the curnums. They execute many of the duties which properly belong to the Collector and the tahsildárs; they distribute the assessment; they assess the ryots as they please, by entering their lands under a class of a higher or lower rate of assessment; they harass them by remeasuring the lands of many every year, which has in fact been rendered necessary by the improper custom of allowing any portion of a

field they choose instead of the whole or none. The present Collector has begun to correct these irregularities; but the orders of the Board of Revenue regarding a money settlement have been entirely misunderstood. The orders of the Board to fix the money rent upon the average produce and prices of a number of years have been interpreted to mean that, after ascertaining the average of any village, the whole of the lands of that village, whether good or bad, are to be assessed at the same rate, instead of being assessed according to their relative produce. The mistake was, however, known to the Board of Revenue before any bad effects could result from it, and measures are now in progress in the district to reform its hitherto defective revenue system.

Madura and Dindigul.

In Madura and Dindigul, the survey and assessment was made by Mr. Hurdis. In Dindigul the assessment was regulated by what is called the hulus, or produce of the land; in Madura it is said to have been regulated rather by the nature of the soil than by its actual produce. But I have little doubt that the process was the same in both districts, and that though the estimated produce was not registered in Madura, it was taken into the calculation, along with the kind or quality of the land, in fixing its taram or rate of assessment. All assessors of land, however differently their accounts may be framed, must be guided in making the assessment by the average collections of former years, and by the nature and present produce of the land and the usual prices of produce.

The fields are not numbered either in Dindigul or Madura; but in Dindigul the assessment of each field is inserted in the register of fields, so that each ryot knows exactly what he has to pay to Government. In Madura the fields are registered in different classes, according to their quality. The extent of each is shown, but not its money assessment. A separate register contains the assessment which belongs to each class, so that great room is left for the curnums to raise or lower the assessment by altering the class of any particular fields.

Omission to preserve the survey accounts.

In both districts very little care has been taken to preserve the survey accounts. Those of several villages are not to be found. Of the remainder, only a small share is in the Collector's cutcherry, and the rest is in the hands of the curnums, written on cadjans.* Measures should be adopted for completing the

* *Cadjans*, books made of the leaves of the palmyra palm, on which the natives write with an iron style.

survey accounts. There ought to be a complete set both with the curnums and the Collector. The expense incurred in the preparation of survey accounts, whatever it may be, is always greatly overbalanced by the advantages derived from them, by the very great saving of time and labour which they enable us to make in all settlements, and by the confidence which they establish between the ryots and the Government by fixing distinctly the amount of assessment in every case, and leaving nothing regarding it arbitrary or doubtful.

Coimbatore. Its satisfactory condition.

In Coimbatore the survey system has been long established, and has for many years been so carefully followed, that all the ryots are perfectly acquainted with it; and, feeling the security derived from it, they are exerting all their means to improve their lands, and the revenue is in consequence gradually but steadily increasing. Nothing is required in this district but to continue in the course which is now observed.

END OF VOL. I.

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